



Dear Monticello School Community,

As our numbers continue to rise, it's time to be frank about the realities we are facing as a school community. This week's number in Wright County is 74.2 daily cases per 10,000 people. While we have had real success in keeping COVID from spreading in our buildings, it is becoming increasingly clear that the rising numbers have started and will continue to impact us.

As county cases rise, it becomes very difficult to sustain the infrastructure needed to successfully run in-person education. We continue to see more and more staff and students forced out of the building due to sickness or quarantine protocols. As districts around the state struggle to find substitutes and staffing resources, it becomes increasingly challenging to safely provide the level of education that our students deserve. At this time, we are simply unable to continue properly staffing our amazing buildings. To continue in this fashion would be a disservice to our employees and students.

To protect the wellbeing of our school community while also providing a positive educational experience we are planning a move to Distance Learning for Grades 1-12 on Tuesday, December 1st. This plan allows us to finish out a week and a half in person (Hybrid), while giving families two and a half weeks to prepare for this change. Please note that Magic Preschool and Kindergarten will plan to remain in Hybrid mode at Eastview Education Center, and we will continue with athletic activities for students in Grades 7-12. Students in Nature Based Education will follow the same learning model as their traditional school classmates. Nature Based students in Grades 1-5 will go to Distance Learning, while Preschool and Kindergarten students will remain in Hybrid.

The size of classrooms and our staffing model at Eastview Education Center give us the opportunity to continue to serve our youngest learners in person for now. We also feel comfortable moving forward with athletic activities for the time being. As long as we can staff our activities programs, we believe that the mental, social, and physical health value offered to students makes it imperative that we continue athletics as we are able.

For Grades 1-12, we are going forward planning for a two-week period of distance learning that will work as a reset for our school community, allowing a deep cleaning while also offering the opportunity for students and staff to get healthy for a potential return to hybrid on Monday, December 14. However, it's important that we are honest that this is a perfect world scenario. There is a real chance that as COVID continues to spread across our community, that Distance Learning could extend into January. However, we are not ready to commit to that. Instead, we

want to continue to monitor and evaluate the decision daily, and give ourselves every opportunity to bring students and staff back in as soon as it is safe to do so.

To recap:

- November 23 and 24 are Distance Learning Days for Grades 6-12. Our elementary students are off, as teachers will be planning for Distance Learning in the morning and conducting virtual parent-teacher conferences in the afternoon.
- November 30th is a No School Day. As previously announced, it will be used as an MDE-granted planning day for staff across the district to prepare for Distance Learning.
- Tuesday, December 1st the district will move to Distance Learning across the district, with the exception of Kindergarten and Magic Preschool at EEC, which will continue to operate in Hybrid mode.
- As of now, athletic activities will continue during this time for Grades 7-12.
- By Tuesday, Dec. 8 we will make a decision and inform parents whether we will be able to return to Hybrid on Monday, December 14. This return will depend heavily upon health data and community trends, and the district will continue to evaluate it on a daily basis.

While there will be a lot more information forthcoming from the district and building levels regarding exactly what this period of Distance Learning will look like, I want to assure all families of a few things right now. We will make certain that families have all of the resources they need to be successful. Prior to November 30th, we will roll out and implement a device plan that assures access to every student across the district. We will continue to provide emergency childcare services throughout this period, and families can sign up [here](#). We will provide additional information regarding meal services to families soon. We will provide significant and accessible mental health resources for all students, staff, and families. And we will put forth a Distance Learning product that is engaging and improved from what families experienced last spring. It will be an experience that expects more out of staff and students; including the expectation that our students will be engaged and follow their daily schedule given by their teachers.

There is no hiding from the challenges of this year. But I'd be remiss if I didn't take this moment to mention the great success we've had in educating students in person for the entire first quarter in the midst of a pandemic. I believe we've built incredible connections and relationships that will allow us to be successful through this phase of Distance Learning.

There will be plenty of further communication, including information about specific Distance Learning structures and how we can all make the best of this opportunity. We are ironing out all details and will have them available soon. Even without every detail, it was important to us that we give families as early of a heads up as possible to start their preparations for this change in

schedule. Please be on the lookout for further information and details, and please continue to take care of yourself and to help us all take care of each other.

If families have questions regarding any of this information, I encourage you to call our COVID-19 hotline at 763-272-2097. All questions that come through that hotline will be directed to the correct person, allowing us as a district to answer your questions as efficiently as possible.

Thank you for your partnership and understanding. We got this!

Superintendent Eric Olson