

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

CASS SCHOOL DISTRICT 63

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Mark R. Cross

Superintendent of Schools



Thursday, December 3, 2020

Dear Cass School District 63 Parents,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving, even though so many people made sacrifices and avoided family situations over the holiday. While it is sad that this is the world we live in right now, it is encouraging to see so much progress with potential vaccines. We certainly still have a long way to go, but we can all be thankful that there may finally be a light at the end of the tunnel!

Until that day comes, we will make every effort to continue to communicate openly and keep you updated as it relates to the education of your children throughout the pandemic. This communication includes several reminders regarding the upcoming changes to our schedules around the holidays as we do our part to help prevent any spread, keep our students, staff and families safe, and help sustain in-person instruction for the long term as we go forward.

Explanation Regarding Timing of Low-Risk Notifications

A couple of people have asked why some of the low-risk notifications come later, so I wanted to provide some explanation. As you know, we provide the low-risk notification messages to the parents at the school in which there was a known positive case present. We always try to do this either the same or the next day after we are made aware of the situation.

Our staff immediately completes the necessary internal identification of close contacts in anticipation of a potential positive case and our first priority is always notifying any close contacts and doing the work that is required at the building level first. In other words, we already know if we have potential close contacts and who those individuals are long before we have test results. This allows us to take the necessary precautions and plan ahead should a close contact or symptomatic individual become a positive case.

Unfortunately, we are not always made aware of positive results in a timely manner. This is not something we can control, but I still want to provide the low-risk notification and be completely transparent, even if we had no close contacts and the case is no longer a concern. This is also a great opportunity to remind families how important it is to communicate any testing and testing results to the school office immediately. I hope this makes sense, but you know that your concerns and questions are always welcome!

Concord Elementary School

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Laura Anderson, Ed.D.

School Principal & District Director of Teaching & Learning

Cass Junior High School

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Mrs. Christine Marcinkewicz

School Principal & District Director of Technology

Blended In-Person Instruction Week of December 7th

The excellent communication and proactive planning from our parents and families has helped us have a very successful week. As a result, we will remain in-person through the week of December 7th.

Remote Instruction Week of December 14th

As planned and announced on November 19th, the week of December 14th (immediately prior to the winter break) will be full remote instruction for all students. Additionally, we are giving our teachers the option of providing remote instruction either from their classroom or home that week. Both of these decisions were made in an effort to help with the reduction of potential spread prior to what is a holiday season for many families.

Whether they teach from home or school, our teachers will follow the same daily schedule and provide the same instruction from Monday, December 14th through Thursday, December 17th as they normally would any other week. School offices will be open during normal hours the week of December 14th.

Temporary Remote Instruction Two Weeks After Winter Break

As a reminder, we are also planning for full remote instruction for the two weeks after the winter holiday break. With a teacher institute day already planned for Monday, January 4th, we will resume with the full remote daily schedule on Tuesday through Friday of that week. We will then follow the remote schedule for just one more week from January 11th through the 15th.

Return to Blended In-Person Instruction January 19th

We plan to resume our blended in-person instruction schedule on Tuesday, January 19th, immediately after the Martin Luther King Holiday. Public health experts expect that the extended holiday could lead to additional spread and health risks that could pose serious safety concerns for our students, staff and families. Not only is this a health concern, but it could potentially impact our ability to sustain in-person learning after the holidays.

This is the primary reason we are putting a brief pause on in-person instruction on both ends of the major holiday break. We want everyone to be healthy and safe over the holiday season and ask that any cases are reported so that we can continue to track this important data. Please remain proactive and vigilant over the holidays. You know how to help stop the spread, so please help keep everyone safe at this critical time of substantial community transmission.

2020-21 School District Calendar

The updated [2020-21 School District Calendar](#) includes the revised schedule as explained above.

COVID-19 Dashboard Updates

The Cass School District 63 COVID-19 Data Dashboard on the following page is also available and updated regularly under the Return to Learn section of our website at www.cassd63.org. This is updated on the web any time there is a new case among students or staff inside or outside of the school setting, as well as any new close contacts in the school setting. The number of students and staff isolated or quarantined is updated each Thursday for the two prior weeks. As a school district we can only provide what we know, so we encourage our parents to make us aware of positive test results, even when students are not at school.

Cass School District 63 COVID-19 Data Dashboard	
Isolated or Quarantined (Week of 11-30-20)	31
Isolated or Quarantined (Week of 11-16-20)	68
Close Contacts at School (Week of 11-30-20)	0
Close Contacts at School (Week of 11-16-20)	0
Total 2020-21 Close Contacts at School	11
Known Positive Cases in the School Setting (Week of 11-30-20)	1
Known Positive Cases in the School Setting (Week of 11-16-20)	0
Total 2020-21 Known Positive Cases in the School Setting	6
Total 2020-21 Reported Cases Outside of the School Setting	9
Total 2020-21 Known and Reported Cases Among Students and Staff	15

Working Toward Continued Success

I am very proud of the fact that we have provided a teaching and learning environment that is safe, responsible and in compliance with current health guidelines, resulting in zero spread of COVID-19 in the school setting. Without question, this should always be the first barometer of success during a public health crisis. This could not have happened without the incredible collaboration, teamwork and communication that has all led to the success so far with our School Reimagined Framework.

I'm just as proud of the effort to maintain high academic standards and full access to the curriculum, despite the challenges of providing synchronous instruction and truly having to reimagine school. We are not doing this the easy way, but we know that this has been a huge challenge for children, parents and families as well. We greatly respect how difficult this is for you as parents and want to do whatever we can to continue to help and support you.

This will not get any easier anytime soon, but there is no doubt that our teachers, staff, parents and community of Cass School District 63 will continue to step up, work together and make this successful. Your questions are always welcome, so please reach out anytime. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mark R. Cross

Mark R. Cross
Superintendent

MRC/glw