

Good Afternoon PCS Families and Staff:

In light of the amount of contact tracing we are doing on a regular, and often daily basis, due to cases coming into the schools from community exposures, we will be holding **fully remote instruction for ALL students in the district from December 21-23, which is the Monday, Tuesday and half day Wednesday just prior to the holiday break.**

This will give everyone about 1 week of no contact within the schools and a decreased chance of getting a call about a case that was reported from during the time students and staff were together in schools over the holiday break. There remains a chance that some close contacts could be identified from the time period prior to these days off; however, this short in-person break coupled with the weekend greatly reduces the odds of students or staff needing to quarantine during the holidays and the vacation period.

While the CDC and DPH are both strongly advising against gatherings involving anyone from outside of one's home, I would be naive to believe some gatherings won't happen. We have seen the results of the increased Thanksgiving gatherings in the weeks since, with a significant increase in the number of families reporting cases in their homes, admittedly spread from a family member at these gatherings.

Many districts have planned for similar or longer full-remote periods, and there is a wide variety of interpretations and decisions about what is best, but this is what I believe makes the best sense for Plainville Schools at this time. Our health director is in favor of our schools remaining open as much as possible, but did not have an issue with this decision for a short remote period. Given the amount of contact tracing and quarantining that has been happening over the last 2 weeks, and until about 10:30 PM last night by a few members of our staff over the last two nights, we may have needed to close anyway due to staff shortages. It is becoming increasingly challenging to cover all classes, with everyone pitching in to help teach our children and keep our schools open.

I will not make any decisions about the period after vacation at this time, and plan to bring everyone back to our current model on January 4th as I sit here and type this now. I will be monitoring everything very closely over the break, and will notify everyone of any changes if they are believed to be necessary for safety and/or staff shortage reasons. While this short remote learning shift may pose some inconvenience for families, I believe this to be the most sensible balance of placing safety first while supporting the academic, social and emotional needs of our district.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Steve LePage, Superintendent of Schools