



Office of the Superintendent – Daniel Clemens, Ed.D.

November 19, 2020

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, I want to share my gratitude for each of you. I truly hope everyone can find time to recharge and renew with a few days at home enjoying family. As you prepare for this short break, please remember to protect yourselves and your family by limiting interaction with those who don't live in your home. We need everyone to do their part in controlling the spread of this virus, helping our community take further steps towards a return to normalcy as soon as possible.

You may be hearing announcements from area school districts discussing a shift to fully virtual learning. Some have considered expanding face-to-face attendance, only to negate those decisions as the number of positive cases rises throughout the state. As you've likely noticed throughout this unusual school year, decisions regarding closures and openings are largely being left up to local school districts. Established protocols, available resources and the level of partnership between school and community put each school district in unique and differing positions as we all attempt to address the pandemic. This is unlike inclement weather days, as no two districts are in the exact same position.

To that end, NKC Schools will continue in our current learning model (K-5 with face-to-face instruction five days a week; grades 6-12 utilizing a hybrid model) upon return Monday, November 30. Elementary schools will begin their two hour flexible learning time on Wednesdays. As we monitor data and stay current regarding guidance and mandates, it is important to acknowledge that everything is subject to change. Should that be the case, we would provide families and staff members as much forewarning as possible.

When we welcome students back following Thanksgiving, the targeted decision-making you are seeing now will still be employed. Several factors that trigger further conversation and analysis include:

- Case rate over a 14-day span
- The slope of the trend line representing cases
- School rate of positive cases versus community rate of positive cases
- Ability to fully staff a site (to include all services available to families)

In applying this criteria, NKC Schools has had seven instances of temporary school closures with a complete shift to virtual learning to date. We will continue to make decisions at the site-based level moving forward. In a district as large as ours, great variance exists. Some of our schools are doing very well, while others need a brief reset via temporary 100% virtual learning days. Initial data is proving this strategy effective as case rates largely decline following these days. Again, my pledge is that NKC Schools will support a face-to-face learning environment so long as it is safe to do so. According to our contact tracing protocols, more than 90% of all COVID cases within our schools have been found to originate in the community. Students and staff are safer in our schools where the use of masks can be monitored and the environment more greatly controlled. We also know that the option of face-to-face learning has a profound effect on a child's

social-emotional health. It is for all of these reasons that NKC Schools will continue to stay the course, making decisions specific to programs and sites.

New information becomes available on a daily basis. We will keep you apprised of any change in plans. In the meantime, let's enter Monday and Tuesday of next week with a clear and committed vision. Thank you to everyone for their tremendous efforts. I am so proud of North Kansas City Schools and grateful for our staff and families as we enter this time of thanksgiving.

Your partner in education,
DC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'DC' with a stylized flourish.