

March 4, 2021

NKC Schools Families,

I want to thank you for your trust in us during this unusual school year full of challenges and many unknowns. We've never been here before! The lessons we are learning together will forever change NKCSchools and inform our path moving forward.

As a learning organization, we have great experience with monitoring data and making the best decisions possible in response. Here are the facts that lie before us, indicating that the time is right to end the hybrid option and welcome our secondary students who physically attend school back five days a week beginning March 22.

Positive Case Rates and Spread within Schools

- 99.6% of the cases at the secondary level have been traced back to exposure in the community, as opposed to inside our schools.
- Community rates are down and NKCSchools rates mirror those. As of last Friday, Clay County had 62 new cases per 100,000 people. This is comparable to data seen in July.
- Our number of positive cases has dropped significantly. Throughout November, December and the first half of January, NKCSchools averaged 72.8 cases per week; an average of 10.4 cases per day. That is a 64.3% higher case rate than that of the last 3 weeks where we averaged only 26 cases per week or an average of 3.7 per day.
- The opening of schools has not contributed to community spread. Having kids in school following protocols has likely helped reduce community spread.
- Elementary schools have successfully conducted school five days a week. Encore/itinerant teachers at the elementary level see all students in the building on a weekly basis.
- 39% of our secondary students are currently virtual. Knowing that no site will need to accommodate 100% physical attendance, our next natural step is to return.
- Metro school districts and many throughout the state have successfully returned.
- We have been bringing some student populations back on an expanded basis after the first of the year. With 17,000 students physically attending, we've had 19 student cases in the past two weeks.
- Studies cited as part of the [Clay County Public Health Center's Full Opening Guidance for Schools](#) saw no difference in exposure with 3, 4 or 5 days of attendance. The Clay County Public Health Center is in full support of our expanded return to school.

NKCSchools' Preparedness

- NKCSchools has more contact tracers per employee and student than any other organization in the city at a rate of 1:860. The expectation of the county is 1:3300.
- NKCSchools has rapid testing available at all of our schools.
- Masks and social distancing will still be required. Clay County advises socially distancing between 3-6 feet, or to the greatest extent possible. All safety protocols will be followed with additional plexiglass provided.

- Temporary building closures will still occur as we monitor the following data points:
 - 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
- A collaborative committee is working to identify district logistics for a full return on March 22. Return to School Teams at each site are customizing plans based on their unique circumstances.
- Vaccine distribution for school personnel has now been approved beginning March 15. Thanks to our partnership with Truman Medical Center and our nurses who have been trained to administer vaccines, NKC Schools has plans and capacity to dispense vaccines upon delivery. At this time, we are anticipating this will occur during the week of March 22. CDC guidance specifies that returning to school is not contingent upon vaccinations.

You likely have further questions. We've developed an [FAQ document](#) to help address those. This form will continually be updated based on your thoughts and inquiries. If you need more, your building principal is always a great place to start. Feel free to utilize the [Let's Talk](#) function on our website, as well.

It is amazing to recall that it has been fifty-two weeks since we've last seen our secondary students five days a week! We absolutely can't wait to welcome them back for a strong finish to the year.

Your Partner in Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Clemens', written in a cursive style.

Daniel Clemens, Ed.D.