



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

November 10, 2020

NKC Nation,

Throughout the fall, NKCS has continually monitored data from our local public health organizations to publish a weekly dashboard and communicate with you regarding positive COVID cases and exposures. It is in that same spirit of transparency that we share concern about several NKCS sites' current number of positive cases. In referencing the Clay County Health Department's [Interim Return to School Guidance](#), there are three data points that trigger consideration of a temporary closure:

- 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

We are closely monitoring all schools, giving special attention to those at which numbers are concerning. If temporary closure seems imminent, communication is being sent to families explaining the possibility.

In addition to the challenge of positive cases, we are seeing our substitute pool of nearly 600 individuals and our Transportation department of 200 employees being stressed to a breaking point. Individuals who come to school symptomatic and later test positive are causing many people: teachers, substitutes, school personnel and bus drivers, to stay home for a minimum of 14 days. While Human Resources has identified employees within our organization in support positions who can step in and help temporarily; the pace of the last two weeks is not sustainable. If we cannot flatten the curve, we will not be able to continue face-to-face instruction.

As we monitor all COVID-19 data, it's important to remember that building/district closure with a shift to completely virtual learning **is still avoidable**. Please help us commit to the best practices we know will prevent the spread of COVID-19: wearing a mask, washing hands frequently, practicing social distancing whenever possible and staying home if sick. Interviews conducted as part of contact tracing are consistently pointing back to failure to follow these principles resulting in positive cases.

All I've described isn't simply a North Kansas City Schools issue. Health Department officials recently heard from the metro-area Chief Medical Officers representing our largest hospitals. They expressed serious challenges in their ability to manage not only COVID-19 patients, but other community members who also need important care. This problem is not limited to the number of physical beds in their facilities; rather, they are experiencing staffing shortages due in large part to the rampant community spread of COVID-19 in the metro area. They have made it clear to us that they need the assistance of our entire community to reduce the spread and improve their ability to provide life-saving medical care.

North Kansas City Schools strongly desires to have our learners back in fully face-to-face instruction, so long as it's safe to do so. Many of our students are in need of additional supports that only a physical presence can provide. The social-emotional well-being of those we serve is of great concern given the current circumstance. NKC Schools' community spread is trending in the wrong direction, however. Please help us recover in the upcoming months and bring our students back for more face-to-face instruction. Thank you for your continued support and understanding during this most trying time in education.

Your Partner in Education,
DC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Mark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.