



October 29, 2020

Prairie Families:

It is with a heavy heart that in the past week we see our 14-day community positivity increase sharply over the past week. This comes at a time when we were experiencing stable to declining percentages in our community for several weeks and a high level of success with our Return to Learn efforts.

We examine all county numbers for impact. We also pay special attention to Linn County numbers because our campus is located in Linn County and the greatest percentage of our students live in Linn County. The following chart shows the change in the 14-day positivity rate over the past week:

County	14-day positivity Wednesday, October 21	14-day positivity Thursday, October 29
Linn	6.5	9.5
Johnson	5.4	6.5
Benton	10.5	11.7

Several weeks ago, we released our District Decision Matrix for guiding our decisions around learning model selection. This matrix can be accessed at [THIS LINK](#). We continue to see very favorable conditions at Tiers II and III, specifically related to daily attendance, low rates of infection related to school and high compliance to the 5 CDC mitigation strategies during the school day. We are also continuing to conduct contact tracing related to exposure. While it is impossible to determine where positive individuals were exposed, the vast majority of our contact tracing has found exposure was most likely outside of school hours, which suggests our mitigation strategies are effective. Our school-day data is consistent with what other districts in the state and country are finding related to the spread of COVID-19 and safety at school.

Community spread is one factor suggested by the CDC to determine onsite school operations and is our Tier I consideration. Absence due to illness and effectiveness of CDC mitigation strategies are key indicators of safety that sit beside 14-day positivity in the CDC guidance related to opening schools and are our Tier II and Tier III considerations. All Tiers are equal in weight in the decision-making process because they provide actual data about the virus in our community (Tier I), actual data about the virus in our schools (Tier II) and trends with factors that are most likely to impact rates at Tier I and II AND safe practices at school (Tier III).

Two Tier I factors on our District matrix give us concern currently because they are outside of trends we have seen since early August. These factors are the 14-day positivity rate exceeding 7% and an increase of over 2% in a week's time.

College Community Schools is steadfast in its belief that full onsite instruction when safe is the preferred model of instruction. We also know that this pandemic brings setbacks that sometimes occur very quickly. We have also been committed to the goal of providing information about changes with a week's notice, knowing that conditions may not make this possible at all times.

Out of an abundance of caution due to the most significant changes in community spread since early August, we have made some difficult decisions related to our planned learning models. We are making these changes to allow us to monitor this recent spike to determine if it is a trend and if our efforts in providing a safe learning environment during this pandemic continue to be successful:

1. **NO CHANGE** - Students in PK-6 will remain in the full onsite model
2. **NO CHANGE** - Temporary Virtual Learning Students will remain in Temporary Virtual Learning for 1st semester (through January 15).
3. **NO CHANGE** - 7th grade will remain in full onsite instruction and mitigation success will continue to be monitored
4. **NEW / CHANGE** - 8th grade students WILL NOT return to full onsite instruction on November 2. While we remain confident in the measures we have in place for 8th grade students, we will continue to monitor success of Tier II and III factors with a hope to return 8th graders to full onsite instruction on November 16 if conditions allow and based on District Metrics and Considerations. Our decision to return will be made no later than Wednesday, November 11. 8th grade students will remain in the **CURRENT HYBRID** arrangement until November 16th, if full onsite instruction is not possible at that time, they will transition to the every-other day A/B schedule on the 16th.
5. **NEW / CHANGE** - starting November 16th, 9-12 grade students will begin an every-other day A/B Schedule. Recent survey data across all surveyed groups indicated challenges to learning in hybrid that we hope to address through more frequent on-site days and shorter at-home periods. 9-12 grade students will remain in this hybrid arrangement until at least December 14. The decision to extend hybrid or return fully on December 14 will be made no later than Wednesday, December 9.

Based on our past experiences in each communication around these difficult decisions, I am sure this news will be met with mixed emotion and reaction. Please know these decisions are difficult and unfortunate. We are doing our very best as a District to respond to this crisis as are all schools in Iowa. Please also know that you can help our District.

Schools have gone to great lengths to adhere to guidelines and mitigate spread and because of these efforts in education, mounting evidence suggests that schools are not currently contributing to community spread. Our challenge is that we only have children 7 hours a day and we need help beyond that time by adhering to CDC recommendations and recognizing that this virus is pervasive and dangerous. Any personal commitment you can make to mitigate community spread by adhering to CDC guidance is appreciated not only by our staff, but most importantly by our students. Our students only have one chance at this school year. Please help us surround them with the support they need to be in school as much as possible this year.

For the most updated schedule, please click [Hybrid Learning Schedule 10-29-20](#).

Thank you for your time, support and consideration.

In Service,

Doug Wheeler