



PLATTSBURGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Hornet students, parents, faculty & staff:

Happy New Year to you all. I'm sure you share my hopes that 2021 sees us through the ongoing pandemic, and that we might eventually reprise a 'normal' educational experience. When this week's switch to the remote mode of instructional delivery was announced, I also informed you that I would review COVID data and invite medical and public health officials' recommendations in order to assess whether an extension of the current period of remote instruction is appropriate.

As you've undoubtedly learned from media reports, the number of daily new infections in Clinton County is as high as it has ever been. This is not unexpected, as experts widely predicted another post-holiday surge. While we are at the end of the virus incubation period for infections which occurred on or around Christmas day, we're not yet even at that point for infections which may stem from New Year's celebrations.

Additionally, the new COVID variant has been detected in Upstate New York, and there is growing concern that this may soon drive higher infection rates in our region. As always, we'll continue to monitor COVID data and make appropriate decisions with regard to the mode of instructional delivery.

Further, we are currently experiencing our highest-yet levels of faculty/staff isolation and quarantine. This figure varies daily as individuals are released from or enter into isolation/quarantine, but the number of faculty/staff members who would be unavailable to help deliver instruction in-person is approximately 20 daily, which would currently make it impractical and unsafe to try to deliver instruction in the hybrid mode.

As such, this temporary transition to the remote mode of instructional delivery will be extended through the week of January 11th. The new projected date for our return to the hybrid mode of delivery is therefore Tuesday, January 19th (the day following the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day statutory holiday).

That date is, of course, a Group 2 hybrid day, which serves to increase the discrepancy in the number of school days between Group 1 and Group 2. Our Teachers have done a good job of trying to accommodate these calendar impacts, and have maintained impressive consistency of pacing/content between the two hybrid groups. Nonetheless, while we don't control the days on which statutory holidays fall, we will endeavor to reschedule future early-release days, as applicable and appropriate, so as to maximize balance between these instructional groups.

I hope that we will indeed be able to return to the hybrid mode of delivery on January 19th, and that the virus will recede sufficiently in our area and allow a phased return to fully in-person instruction. Obviously, the COVID situation does not currently support such, but both the Reopening Planning Committee and the Board of Education will now work on a framework for eventually returning

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students to a 'normal' school day. While it remains impossible to accurately predict future infection rates and virus spread, I am very hopeful that some form of springtime transition to the fully in-person mode will be possible. Again, I'm sure everyone shares this desire to move past this terrible pandemic.

As always, our School Nurses and Administrators are eager to support students and families, and I encourage you to contact these individuals with any needs. For our older students (who may be reading and interpreting this message themselves), I implore you to continue to work hard to navigate this difficult situation. Though none of this current experience is ideal, the efforts which you (and your teachers and parents) have put forth are inspiring – and necessary to continue your academic growth amidst these challenging circumstances. Keep it up!

I'll certainly share another message next week, if the COVID spread does not slow and a further extension of this period of remote instruction is necessary. Until then, I join you in hoping that we'll be able to return to the hybrid mode on January 19th.

With thanks,

Jay Lebrun

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