

November 24, 2020

Dear Onteora Families:

As we continue to navigate our way through the realities of an ongoing pandemic environment and the increase in COVID-19 positive cases, Onteora, like other districts, continues to address the impact the pandemic is having on our community and our schools.

As I mentioned in the letter on Friday, we have been reviewing the statewide and local data along with the predictions of spikes in COVID following the Thanksgiving break. While I believe that our District has worked hard to keep the number of educational disruptions as low as possible, I also believe that the result of the Thanksgiving holiday will not be known immediately following our currently scheduled break given that the incubation period for COVID is between two and fourteen days. In order to exercise as much caution as possible, and be able to track the impact of the holiday on the community metrics, we will “pause” our hybrid and in-person instructional model and shift instruction to a full remote learning schedule after the upcoming Thanksgiving break. We will return our students to our buildings on Monday, December 14th.

Please know our staff has been fully prepared for this scenario and will continue to do everything necessary to ensure your child’s academic success. We applaud the work that is being done by our faculty, students and families during these unprecedented times.

This “pause” of in-person instruction following the Thanksgiving break allows families to navigate the Thanksgiving holiday without negatively impacting our district. I encourage everyone to continue to follow the guidelines related to COVID in an effort to continue to keep our community safe.

Here’s the instructional model schedule for the coming weeks:

November 25, 2020 - November 27, 2020 - Schools closed for Thanksgiving break

November 30, 2020 - December 11, 2020 - The district will operate on a fully remote schedule.

Please know this decision was made after a very careful and thoughtful review of current conditions, trends, and projections. I feel that this plan is in the best interests of our students, staff, and community. I remain hopeful that following this pause, we can return to school with an understanding of the full impact of the holiday as it relates to our school community.

During this time, we will continue to provide meals for our students. Additional information will be posted so that families can sign up for meals for their students during the period of remote instruction.

This is important to stress: we will continue to monitor this fluid situation. It is possible this plan may be further modified based on current conditions, UC DOH, state, and local mandates. The new zone based strategy that Governor Cuomo has implemented is impacting school districts statewide. The health and safety of everyone in our community remains our first and most important priority.

We remain grateful for your ongoing support, flexibility, and understanding during these challenging times. Thank you for the trust you give to us to provide outstanding education to your children.

Sincerely,

Victoria McLaren
Superintendent of Schools