



November 24, 2020

Dear Gull Lake Community Schools Families,

Over the past several weeks, our District, like many others in the region, is seeing a rapid increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases being confirmed for both students and staff members. As part of our plan for disrupting the spread of COVID-19, we are committed to using temporary measures such as entering quarantine during peak transmission times so that safe staffing levels can be maintained and proper contact tracing can be conducted and delivered with fidelity. As a result of our high numbers of positive cases and quarantines we hit the pause button on in-person learning on November 16 in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Since that time, we have continued to experience new positive COVID-19 cases that are directly impacting our staffing at all levels of each building, including support staff, teachers and administrators. To date, we have had 17 staff and 34 students test positive, and we have had 359 students in quarantine.

Due to the high number of positive cases and quarantines we are still experiencing at this particular moment during our school year, we are keeping our finger on the pause button by keeping all students' grades Y5 - 8 in 100% remote virtual instruction for the week of November 30th - December 4th with the intent to return to in-person learning on December 7th provided we can reach safe staffing levels. We will return to in-person learning on Monday, December 7th for Y5-5th grade and Hybrid Learning for grades 6-8. The MDHHS order for grades 9-12 extends through December 9th and the hybrid schedule will resume December 10th for high school students.

Nurse Megan and the Gull Lake team continue to perform our contact tracing protocol and are keeping the Kalamazoo Health and Community Services Department apprised. The team has communicated necessary safety information to involved individuals and families. We ask that everyone who has a confirmed positive case contact Nurse Megan with that information as soon as you are aware so that we can continue mitigate and manage potential exposures.

Our ability to offer in-person learning is contingent upon safe staffing levels. We want to thank all those who have been practicing the recommendations of Nurse Megan and our Health Department in order to promote safe in-person learning. Our COVID-19 trend line is of great concern and we are prepared to take necessary steps to reduce potential exposures if the situation warrants, such as the additional days of remote virtual instruction added to our calendar at the start of next week.

Thank you for your continued diligence adhering to District safety protocols.

Be safe, be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raphael Rittenhouse', is written in a cursive style.

Raphael Rittenhouse/Superintendent
Gull Lake Community Schools