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## Superintendent Update Sept 29 2021

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September 29, 2021

Dear DCS Parents and Community,

As September winds down, we want to thank the entire DCS Community for your continued support. Our students are in classrooms every day and we're so fortunate to have such a supportive community. Overall, the Dexter Community has a long history of being **kind, empathetic**, and committed to our kids. As a school district, we're committed to supporting our students in creating a culture of listening open-mindedly to different ideas and values while demonstrating **Kindness and Empathy** with each other.

**Please Be Nice to Our Staff (and each other):** DCS is experiencing an increase of frustrated community members and parents calling, emailing, posting on social media, and berating our staff. Everyone at DCS works to support kids. We care about every student at Dexter Community Schools and we spend our careers dedicated to supporting the children in Dexter. We know the pandemic has added significant stress on everyone. We also know that occasionally we need to remind ourselves that no individual deserves to be sworn at, berated over the phone, sent emails that are unkind or unproductive, or find out they're being bashed on social media. Our entire staff is giving everything we have to educate and support our students. We ask that our entire community takes some time to reflect on how we demonstrate **Kindness and Empathy** with each other, assume positive intent, and model this for our students.

**We Desperately Need Your Help (Staffing):** DCS is not immune to the statewide and national staffing shortages. Everywhere you drive in the area (and country) has "Now Hiring" signs posted. Like every employer, we are struggling to fill positions and are looking for your help. In recent memory, we have never been so short of staff and subs. Our existing staff is being stretched to do multiple jobs as positions remain unfilled. DCS has a history of operating as efficiently as possible in order to provide every opportunity we can for kids. We need your help. If you know of anyone who would like to work at Jenkins (Infants, Toddlers, Preschool), Buildings & Grounds, Food & Nutrition, Transportation, Community Education, ParaEducators, Substitute Teachers, Substitute Paras, or Substitute Anything, please have them contact [hr@dexterschools.org](mailto:hr@dexterschools.org). We will work around college classes or work to share positions between potential employees. If you know of any recent graduates or caring adults, please send them our way. DCS employees can send their children to DCS, even if they live outside of the district. Any help is greatly appreciated. This help includes consistently demonstrating **Kindness and Empathy** to the staff we currently have so we can continue to serve our students.

**Homecoming and Spirit Week:** Spirit Week is next week with the Homecoming Parade and Game on Friday, October 8th. Here is the **Spirit Week Schedule!** Go Dreads! This year's homecoming festivities will be similar to what DHS has done in the past. There will be a spirit week, pep rally, parade, and a dance (outdoors).

**Covid-19 Update:** Over the past week, we've seen a significant increase in the number of **positive cases** in our school community. Our staff is working to maintain a 3' distance between students and staff as much as possible. This, combined with multiple mitigation methods including masking and our high level of vaccinations are the best measures to keep our students and staff safe and in school. Below is a guide from the Washtenaw County Health Department for Student Illness Decision Making and School Staff Illness Decision Making.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has provided **this updated guidance** to schools regarding quarantines, isolation, etc. DCS is following this guidance, including rapid testing students who are close contacts. We've been fortunate to be able to juggle these testing duties between administrators and our school nurse for the past month but are

now employing an additional nurse for these duties through grant funding. Our goal is to keep kids in school and this step helps tremendously.

Dexter Community Schools has arranged for PCR testing with a 6 to 12-hour turnaround offered at Jensen's Pharmacy in Dexter at [7067 Dexter Ann Arbor Road](https://www.google.com/maps/place/7067+Dexter+Ann+Arbor+Road,+Dexter,+MI+48130/@42.281417,-83.014117,15z). Jensen's is open Monday through Saturday between 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Please pre-register before arriving at [rapidbio.com/covid19](https://rapidbio.com/covid19).

**Our Students are Having a Great School Year:** Our students are having a great school year thanks to the dedication of our staff and community. Last year was one of constant uncertainty and we are fortunate to be back in school every day with our students. Student after-school activities are back and our kids are enjoying what makes Dexter such a great place to grow up. We can't thank you enough for your consistent support and partnership in educating our students. Every day, we hear laughter and joy throughout our schools and are blessed to spend our days with students.

Thank you for your commitment to DCS, have a great week, and Go Dreads!

Sincerely,

Christopher Timmis, EdD

Superintendent



**What to do if someone is sick**

Here is a general overview of guidance for students and staff. Additional next steps for each situation may need to be discussed with WCHD case investigators. See usual communicable disease guidelines (referenced below) [here](#).

