

REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS

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Rocket Families,

The question has been asked, “when is enough enough?” Navigating this for the first and hopefully only time, I guess the answer is debatable. As the person who has the responsibility, I have to say “enough” at a couple of levels/buildings. Over the past two weeks, R-P has experienced a significant increase in positive COVID cases and a correspondingly high number of students and staff being placed into quarantine as a result of being considered “close contacts.” The result has been a tremendously disruptive impact of operating with so many students and staff working remotely. Our system is stretched incredibly thin. We will be transitioning to remote learning at the High School and the Middle School according to the following timetable:

November 11 (today)- Continue in person learning. This will allow students and staff to solidify plans for remote learning.

November 12-November 25- R-PHS and R-PMS will operate via remote learning. Your child’s teacher will share specifics and questions can be directed to the teacher or building principal as needed.

November 30- We tentatively plan to return to in-person (F2F) learning. How the numbers progress (or regress) will determine if this is likely or possible. With the Thanksgiving Holiday, and the gatherings associated with it, this date might need to be reconsidered.

This plan is designed to allow us to focus on teaching and learning, rather than COVID and contact tracing. In order for R-PMS, R-PHS, and all local schools for that matter, to be in or even return to school, we all need to be on the same page relative to mitigation strategies. There seems to be no other way for us to move forward; wear a mask, social/physical distance, keep your and your child’s physically social circle small, and wash hands regularly.

A few additional notes:

- R-P Intermediate and all Elementary buildings will remain open. (All Pre-K through 6th grade)
- Middle school and high school athletics will continue as scheduled. Parents of athletes will receive additional communication from their child’s coach.
- Child care centers will remain open.
- R-P will continue to provide meals. A schedule will be communicated by each buildings’ principal.

Rockets, this decision has come after watching our numbers spike. In the first 49 days of school, we had one confirmed positive case in our district. In the past 22 days, we have added more than two dozen positive cases. Our rise in cases has occurred at the same times as Muskegon County has seen a significant increase in positive cases. As of this afternoon, we have 170 students and 9 staff in quarantine or isolation (or awaiting test results) with a majority of them a result of “out of school” events or encounters, and a huge majority at the 7th-12th grade levels. While almost every transmission



of the virus can be traced to an out of school event or encounter, the numbers are such that, without a “pause” or “reset”, we can likely expect the transmission in and through school to escalate. In addition our attendance rates at the HS and MS this week have been 19.% (HS) and 19.7%(MS) absent in buildings where less than 5% is the norm. This decision is not being made in haste or without serious reservations. Any unscheduled break from F2F (face-to-face) learning is weighed against all potential alternatives before being decided. Being face-to-face for those who chose F2F is best.... Until the risks outweigh the benefits. We will work hard on our end to resume and maintain in-person instruction following this brief move to remote learning R-PMS and R-PHS.

Sincerely,

Steve

Steve Edwards

Superintendent, Reeths-Puffer Schools

