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School Town of Highland Parents and Community:

Looking ahead, beginning November 23rd through December 4th all School Town of Highland buildings K-12 will move back to only virtual learning. This will be handled the same as the first six weeks of school this year. Our prospective return date will be December 7th. I realize the hardship this will cause many families, thus I wanted to provide at least a week to plan accordingly.

This was not a decision I made lightly, but we are seeing an upward trend in our staffing needs, and based on the closure of several local districts, we anticipate those staffing needs to only get worse. Additionally, with Thanksgiving Break nearing, we understand many families will still be traveling. We would like to have an additional week out of school after Thanksgiving Break to monitor our staffing needs should more quarantines and positive cases result from these anticipated family gatherings.

I was advised recently by the Lake County Health Department that all schools are able to stay open **even if the county moves into the red zone** as long as we are able to keep our students and staff safe by following the rules and procedures we have in place and keep schools staffed properly.

It has become abundantly clear the spread of the virus does not seem to be occurring within the schools. Our masking, hand washing, social distancing and cleaning regiments are working. Instead, it is behaviors within our communities that will ultimately decide the future infection trend, especially with the holidays and colder days ahead.

I appreciate all the work our staff, students and community members have done up to this point to work with us as we navigate these uncertain times. We ask for continued vigilance and adherence to the known ways to help curb this pandemic:

washing hands frequently, masking regularly and distancing as much as possible. Should we need to extend the time we are in the virtual environment only, our goal will be to communicate that to staff and parents no later than December 3rd.

Again, all School Town of Highland Schools will move to only a virtual setting from November 23rd to December 4th. Thank you in advance for helping our school town do what is necessary to get back to school on December 7th. Please stay safe during these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Smith

School Town of Highland Superintendent