

South Lewis Central School District

Mr. Douglas Premo, Superintendent

4264 East Rd
PO Box 10
Turin, NY 13473
315-348-2500
Fax: 315-348-2510
www.southlewis.org

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Dear South Lewis School Community:

Last week I sent a communication to our school community to inform them of on-going discussions regarding the consideration being given to a precautionary or preventative extended school closure due to the community spread of COVID-19 throughout Lewis County. At this time the South Lewis Central School has decided that we will not close for an extended period of time for precautionary reasons. Rather, for the time being, we will continue to stay open until we have an outbreak of positive cases connected to our school, have too numerous staff or students in quarantine to operate safely or effectively, or are required to close by order. Of course, we will continue to monitor and appropriately respond to the often quickly shifting dynamics in our local and regional community.

While we recognize the very real and serious COVID concern in the Lewis County community, specifically facing our healthcare system and their ability to provide appropriate care and treatment for those who are sick, we are not confident that a school closure is going to have the needed impact and produce the desired outcome of reduced community spread. Additionally, there are many potential negative impacts that a preventative or precautionary school closure can have on our community, faculty/staff, families and students. Lastly, it is important to recognize that schools have had remarkable success and are not the reason or cause for community spread. Schools have proven to be safe places where the foundational and critical protocols of social distancing, mask wearing, proper hand hygiene and routine cleaning and disinfecting are a model for others to follow. Rather, personal and community behavior away from the school has been the concern and cause for outbreak.

As we continue to open our doors each day to faculty/staff, students and visitors, I humbly ask that we all recognize and be mindful of the ramifications of our own personal actions. We know that COVID-19 has no friends and crosses all ideological viewpoints. It does not discriminate and can find any one of us. Our personal choices and actions are meaningful and can impact our families, friends, places of worship or work, businesses and schools. I simply ask that we all tighten our belts, recalibrate and refocus to do all we can to help mitigate community spread. We truly are all in this together.

This decision to remain open has not come without great discussion, debate and thoughtful consideration. We care deeply not only about our immediate school family, but our community at-large. We will continue to have strong, consistent and collaborative relationships with other school districts, government officials, the healthcare system and Public Health. We will continue to listen, communicate and strive to make decisions that are in the best interests of all. We are thinking of you. May you have a wonderful upcoming holiday season. Be well and be safe.

Sincerely,



Douglas Premo
Superintendent of Schools