



CARBON

SCHOOL DISTRICT

November 19, 2020

Carbon School District Families,

There has been much talk in the community and amongst school district staff regarding a possible virtual learning week following the Thanksgiving break. Virtual learning means that regular classes are NOT held and both teaching and learning are taking place via technology or packets at home.

In consultation with the Southeast Utah Health Department, we have determined that virtual learning is not the best option at this time. The following factors were part of the criteria for making this decision.

- Students may be at greater risk of spread during virtual learning because they are NOT in school where masks are required and extra sanitation efforts are implemented.
- Our ability to rapid-test has improved over the last few weeks. This means that we can respond more quickly to COVID-19 situations. This testing is not as available to students and staff members when school is not in session. By physically staying in school, students and staff members have access to these tests as needed.
- It has been demonstrated time and again that transmission of the COVID-19 virus is NOT happening in school when mitigating factors are followed. This means that school is one of the safest places to be.
- There is concern that a 4 day Thanksgiving holiday could turn into a 10 day visit complete with social activities which would increase the chances of spread while keeping the break to 4 days could decrease spread.
 - Extending the days out of school could make the spread worse, not better.
- There appears to be no stark benefit to implementing virtual learning at this time. A stark benefit in reducing the spread of COVID-19 would be necessary if we were to make a decision that impacts so many families as dramatically as virtual learning would.
 - Child care needs may require grouping students or placing students in the care of older at-risk people.
- In reaching out to all surrounding districts (Emery, Grand, San Juan, Sevier, North Summit, Millard, Nebo and Duchesne) none of them, at the time of this letter, are considering taking such action for the same reasons as listed above.

We will continue to monitor every positive case and consult with the Southeast Utah Health Department to determine the best course of action by school and as a district during this difficult time. As recently experienced with Castle Valley Center, any school may be placed on virtual learning if the number of positive cases warrant such action. Our efforts are to make sure all healthy students can be in school and receive a quality education in a way that keeps them and school staff members safe.

Sincerely,

Lance Hatch, Superintendent