

The numbers in Roseau County continue to soar. The current active case rate is 281.19 with 426 positive cases. While those numbers are County-wide and primarily outside of the school, the external numbers DO have an effect on our internal metrics. The rise in cases directly correlated with a spike in staff absences and student quarantine numbers that eventually led to our current state of a Distance Learning reset.

After gathering data over these past two weeks, soliciting feedback from Public Health, major employers, Healthcare providers, and other regional districts we have received a bevy of mixed messages on what is the best course of action to move us forward. That being the case, WPS will be **extending our period of Distance Learning with a target date of return being January 18, 2021.**

Here is some of the rationale behind the return date. First, with the Governor's dial back and CDC plea to stay in place and limit Thanksgiving to small immediate family gatherings, we recognize the terrible starting point that Roseau County has as a baseline. Bringing one thousand people together under even more stringent quarantine guidelines immediately following the holiday could be counterproductive and lead to an immediate reversal of any benefit we have gained in this reset period.

Second, we find that infection typically takes between 7 and 10 days to present symptoms. That being the case, individuals would be most contagious within a week or so following Thanksgiving. Taking 2 additional weeks of Distance Learning to ensure safety from a potential Thanksgiving outbreak only leaves us with 8 school days prior to Christmas break. Bringing everyone back for those 8 days and potentially infecting individuals immediately prior to Christmas is not in our best interest. That puts us to January 4, which follows the same guidance and thought process that faces us coming off of Thanksgiving. Giving 2 weeks at that point to ascertain any additional spread of infection will allow us to begin to bring students back on January 18 provided we begin to get a handle on this disease and take precautions community-wide during the upcoming holiday season.

We would love to have our students back in the building. However, the reality grounded in science and current data suggests that it is in the best interest of our students and staff to continue with Distance Learning until January 18.

Know that these decisions are not made lightly. We understand the repercussions of this decision and hope that with your vigilance and that of our community we will be able to turn the tide and return soon. In order to prevent and contain further spread of COVID-19, it needs to be a "Community Effort!"

Nurse Deb wants to reiterate the message communicated by LifeCare Medical Center, "We need your help. We need you to please follow the guidelines; for yourself, for your family, for your friends, for your neighbors. For Roseau County. If you go anywhere, MASK UP! If you feel sick, STAY HOME! If you need to be tested, call 463-4750." We also recognize the value of the call that if you are traveling out of state during this time that you self-quarantine for 14 days upon your return.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Deb Landin. I also ask that you keep her informed of any COVID-like activity that you are experiencing in your homes. Please call her at 386-6044 or 218-242-2583.

Stay safe, stay well, and enjoy the upcoming break and time with immediate family!