

Dear Merrimack Families and District Staff~

I hope this finds you all well and looking forward to a pleasant long weekend ahead. I am writing this afternoon to provide you with a few updates of some importance.

1. Confirming that on November 2nd and 3rd there will be NO SCHOOL for students.
 - November 2nd, all Merrimack teachers will be working on CANVAS implementation, including training and transitioning to that platform.
 - November 3rd, all schools will be closed for Election Day. Merrimack High School and Merrimack Middle School will serve as polling sites.
 - These dates were already built into the District calendar for the purposes of determining instructional hours for this school year.
2. The period of quarantine for most of our high school student athletes will be ending within the next few days. As of this afternoon, there are no additional reports of COVID-19 at the high school related to the previously confirmed positive cases.
3. There remains no evidence of in-school transmission of COVID-19 at Merrimack High School.
4. Currently one staff member in the District, but NOT at Merrimack High School, has tested positive for COVID-19. The source of infection appears to have come from contact outside the school setting. In that case, all potentially impacted students and families were notified according to NH DHHS and Merrimack School District protocols. Following NH DHHS and Merrimack School District protocols it was determined that no close contact with staff, students or families was determined to have occurred and school operations were able to continue.
5. As of yesterday, NH DHHS reports 17 active cases of COVID-19 in Merrimack. Except for Nashua and Manchester, Merrimack has the highest number of active cases of any town/city in the So. Central region of New Hampshire. As we've said so many times before, this is a community problem and can only be resolved through community efforts. In order to maintain school and district operations, we must continue to work together to prevent further spread. We are hugely grateful to our students, their families, and our teachers and all staff for partnering with the District through the consistent wearing of masks, maintaining proper social distancing throughout the school day, and observing all other safety protocols in place at each of our schools and offices. These behaviors, consistently followed, are the reason we have been able to contain the recent outbreak among our students and why we have such low incidence among our staff. Your continued partnership in this matter will be the key in allowing school and district operations to continue in the current form.
6. October 30th remains the date for an announcement concerning whether we maintain our current hybrid model or shift to some other form. We recognize how important this decision is for everyone—from students and families to teachers and all staff, and that many of you would like an idea of what the district's future plans might be. However, given the changing circumstances in the state at the moment, where NH DHHS has reported increases in community transmission and confirmed positive cases are back on the rise, we simply cannot rush a decision on a matter of such importance. We will continue to monitor data, work with our partners at NH DHHS, and carefully evaluate conditions to make a decision that is in the best interests of our students, their families, and all staff.

As always, we thank you for your patience and partnership.

Mark McLaughlin
Superintendent