

November 13, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Simsbury Public Schools Staff:

On behalf of the administration, I want to recognize the efforts of students, staff, and families who have complied with the mitigation strategies put in place from the onset of the school year. Our goal remains to keep our schools open for in-person instruction and learning. We appreciate your continued support and understanding during these challenging times. With the holiday season approaching, I want to provide some information that may impact your family over the coming weeks.

#### **FVHD Data/ School COVID Cases**

We continue to meet weekly with the Farmington Valley Health District to discuss and review the area data. As you are aware, we have seen a recent uptick of cases in the past two weeks. As of the most recent data publication, Simsbury remains in the yellow category at 9.2 per 100,000 in population which supports our current models of instruction. This data can be found by scrolling down on the Coronavirus webpage to access the [FVHD Learning Model Indicator Chart](#).

We continue to update our COVID dashboard, on the [Coronavirus Update](#) website, each Friday. Starting next week, I will send a weekly notice to district families relative to recent COVID cases in our schools along with other relevant updates. Principals will send a parent and staff notification whenever a case occurs in each individual school. While we have received questions about extending the holiday closure period, it is not what we have been advised to do. The CT Department of Public Health (DPH) and the CT Department of Education (CSDE) continue to state that schools are safe places where we don't see person-to-person transmission or outbreaks of COVID-19. At this time, CSDE and DPH "are not recommending that districts proactively close for prolonged periods of time in anticipation of changes in disease prevalence." Superintendents received a memo last week informing us that "arbitrary, date-based closures of school are not warranted at this time." The bulk of transmission events are happening at home or in the community. We continue to ask for your help in reducing the number of new cases and again thank you for your efforts.

#### **CT Travel Advisory**

Please remember that the State of Connecticut has a travel advisory in effect. There are currently 46 states listed. Students or staff traveling to these states are required to follow the guidelines outlined on the [CT Travel Advisory website](#). These guidelines state that for a student or staff member to be admitted back to school after traveling to one of these 46 states, they must either quarantine for 14 days or get a PCR test for COVID-19. Students and staff must quarantine while awaiting test results, and they may return to school only after receiving a negative test result. Staff members can send their test results to Human Resources Coordinator, Cindi Freilinger. Additionally, due to the increasing rate of COVID-19 in CT, Governor Lamont has limited private indoor and outdoor gatherings to no more than 10 people.

#### **Snow Days**

I also want to update you on the school district's plan relative to snow days. The CT Board of Education has approved the option for school districts to treat snow days as remote learning days during the 2020-21 school year. In Simsbury, if there is a prediction of significant snow prior to the end of the school day, students and staff will be instructed to take their materials home for distance learning the following day(s). These days will have a structured schedule. If the weather is unpredictable, a traditional snow day will be called. Additionally in the case of widespread power/internet outages that might impact teachers and students, school will not be in session.

I wish all of you a safe and healthy Thanksgiving. We have much to be thankful for in this community.

Be well,

Matt Curtis  
Superintendent of Schools