

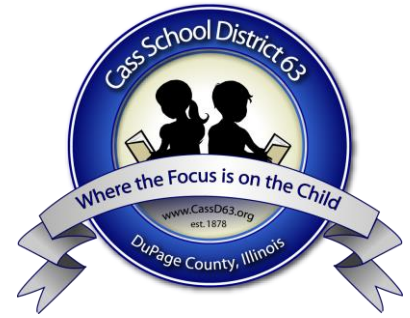
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

CASS SCHOOL DISTRICT 63

8502 Bailey Road • Darien, Illinois 60561-5333
331-481-4000 • Fax 331-481-4001 • mcross@casd63.org

Mark R. Cross

Superintendent of Schools



Thursday, November 19, 2020

Dear Cass School District 63 Parents,

We have some important updates to share with you as we head into the holiday season. We are going to make some temporary changes around the two-week holiday break that we believe will help us keep everyone safe, as well as sustain in-person instruction for the longer term. As you already know, parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for this coming Monday and Tuesday, and there is no school otherwise scheduled next week due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Please read this over and as always, please reach out with any questions or concerns at all. On behalf of the teachers, staff, administration and Board of Education, we truly appreciate your understanding and support of our students, teachers and school district in these very challenging times.

Remaining with In-Person Blended Instruction through December 10th

Despite the challenges related to COVID-19 within our community and in the area, we are on track to remain in-person after next week's parent-teacher conferences and Thanksgiving. Unless forced to change through a local or statewide executive order OR as it relates to a health concern within our district, we plan to remain in-person during this time while many other schools have been forced to go fully remote. While this has been a significant challenge on several fronts, I am proud of our staff in our efforts to keep everyone safe here at school while we monitor this from day to day.

Temporary Remote Instruction One Week Prior to Winter Break

In looking ahead and giving our parents time to plan accordingly, we are going to full remote instruction for the one week prior to the winter break. We take any changes in our schedule very seriously and recognize that this is disruptive for some families, which is why we wanted to communicate with you now so that you can plan ahead.

To help with the reduction of potential spread prior to what is a holiday season for many families, we are giving our teachers the option of providing remote instruction either from their classroom or home that week. Whether they teach from home or at school, they will follow the same daily schedule and provide the same instruction from Monday, December 14th through Thursday, December 17th as they normally would any other week. As a reminder, Friday, December 18th is a School Improvement Day so there will be no live instruction on that day.

Concord Elementary School

Cass School District 63
1019 Concord Place • Darien, Illinois 60561-5124
331-481-4010 • Fax 331-481-4011 • landerson@casd63.org

Laura Anderson, Ed.D.

School Principal & District Director of Teaching & Learning

Cass Junior High School

Cass School District 63
8502 Bailey Road • Darien, Illinois 60561-5333
331-481-4020 • Fax 331-481-4021 • cmarcinkewicz@casd63.org

Mrs. Christine Marcinkewicz

School Principal & District Director of Technology

Temporary Remote Instruction Two Weeks After Winter Break

We are also communicating at this time that we are planning for full remote instruction for the two weeks after the winter holiday break. With a teacher institute day already planned for Monday, January 4th, we will resume with the full remote daily schedule on Tuesday through Friday of that week. We will then follow the remote schedule for just one more week from January 11th through the 15th.

Return to In-Person Blended Instruction January 19th

We plan to resume our blended in-person instruction schedule on Tuesday, January 19th, immediately following the Martin Luther King Holiday. We believe that it is critical to take a pause after the long holiday break, as we acknowledge that despite the current health conditions, many families will likely be mixing and traveling.

It is expected that the extended holiday could lead to additional spread and health risks that could not only pose serious safety concerns for our students, staff and families, but may also limit our ability to sustain in-person learning after the holidays. We do not want either scenario to be the case, and it is the primary reason we are putting a brief pause on in-person instruction on both ends of the major holiday break. We want everyone to be healthy and safe over the holiday season. We ask that any cases are reported so that we can continue to track this important data. And we ask that everyone remains proactive and vigilant over the holidays. You know how to help stop the spread, so please help keep everyone safe at this critical time of substantial community transmission.

Updated 2020-21 Calendar and Reminders for Next Week

The updated [2020-21 School District Calendar](#) includes the revised schedule as explained above.

A Word on Thanksgiving and Travel

We appreciate that some of our families have opted for remote instruction as a proactive measure around Thanksgiving. We do know that some of you will be traveling over the shorter holiday, and we would prefer to not have to close our schools immediately following Thanksgiving. To help avoid this scenario, please stay safe over this next week, continue to report any symptoms and close contacts and make the decision to self-quarantine if there is any risk after the holidays. Your cooperation helps ensure the safety of our students and staff, as well as the ability to maintain in-person instruction.

Community Transmission and Self-Reporting

We are in week two of "substantial community transmission", with a rolling average of approximately 12 to 14 percent in our communities of Darien and Willowbrook. While we have been able to keep any spread outside of our school district walls, we are taking this surge in community numbers very seriously and we will continue to monitor this carefully, particularly around the various holidays.

COVID-19 Data Dashboard Updates

In our ongoing effort to promote and maintain transparency within the district as we also closely monitor the data in our community, we have made some important updates to our COVID-19 Data Dashboard. The last three lines now include a breakdown of known positive cases, including those in the school setting, followed by any known cases among students and staff that were never in the school setting, followed by the total of the two. Again, it is important to note that we can only provide what we know, so we encourage our parents to let us know of positive test results, even when students are not at school. Please reach out with any questions regarding this information.

Cass School District 63 COVID-19 Data Dashboard	
Isolated or Quarantined (Week of 11-16-20)	68
Isolated or Quarantined (Week of 11-9-20)	67
Close Contacts at School (Week of 11-16-20)	0
Close Contacts at School (Week of 11-9-20)	5
Total 2020-21 Close Contacts at School	11
Known Positive Cases in the School Setting (Week of 11-16-20)	0
Known Positive Cases in the School Setting (Week of 11-9-20)	2
Total 2020-21 Known Positive Cases in the School Setting	4
Total 2020-21 Reported Cases Outside of the School Setting	9
Total 2020-21 Known and Reported Cases Among Students and Staff	13

Concord NWEA Testing Schedule

NWEA testing for in-person students in 1st through 4th grades will be held during the week of December 7th. Teachers are sending out details and information specific to your child.

For fully remote students in 1st through 4th grades, we are asking parents to drop off and pick up your child for testing at Concord Elementary School according to the schedule below. Students should wear a mask and bring their self-certification form signed by their parents, an extra clean mask in a Ziplock bag, their fully charged Chromebook and charger, at least two sharpened pencils and a bottle of water with a lid for both days. All social distancing and safety protocols will be strictly enforced. The testing schedule is as follows:

NWEA Reading Assessment – Friday, December 4th, 8:00 – 10:30 a.m.
NWEA Mathematics Assessment – Friday, December 11th, 8:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Also, due to testing and school improvement days, with the exception of students who are testing, ALL Fridays in December will be asynchronous learning days with no live instruction for Concord students. If you have any questions or are not able to bring your child in to complete the NWEA testing, please contact the Concord Elementary School Office at 331-481-4010 as soon as possible.

No NoteTotes Next Week

While we will always communicate as needed, NoteTotes will be not distributed next week due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Thank you for your support, and please reach out with any questions. On behalf of all of us here in Cass 63, I hope you and your family have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Cross

Mark R. Cross
Superintendent

MRC/glw