

November 15, 2020

Dear Parents and Community,

I apologize for the short notice, but 2020 just keeps on giving! As many of you know we had our first confirmed local COVID case that necessitated our closing for school last Thursday. Naturally, this reality creates a lot of concern, fear, questions, and uncertainty regarding risks to our school, and broader community.

As for risk to students and staff, the experts at the Benton County Health Department have been clear that the risks remain the same as they have been all fall. What has changed is the reality of confirmed local spread.

As I have shared in past emails, "we WILL have COVID cases as we go through the school year." This reality is now here! Knowing the risks haven't changed is only part of the equation that a lonely Superintendent must consider. The thought of local spread, and the opportunity to create a 14-day break to combat it is the other half of the equation.

The CDC states that the best way to slow the spread of a confirmed COVID outbreak is to create a 14 day window, conduct extensive contact tracing, get potential contacts tested and into quarantine with needed time to get the results back to guide decision making.

We are so very fortunate to be presented with this opportunity timed with our previously scheduled Thanksgiving Break, which serves to minimize the disruption to in-person learning while creating the window needed to address the local outbreak, and keep our school safe to reopen on November 30th.

I realize that this decision will create a great deal of adversity for many of our families, and for that I apologize. I believe strongly that this path is prudent and will serve to keep our school open during the COVID surge that is expected to last through January and into February.

Let me be clear, our school has been, and continues to be a safe place for our kids to attend and receive in-person instruction. We are voluntarily taking this action to address the local spread and keep it from getting worse. I wish to thank all of our parents, families, and community stakeholders for your continued patience and understanding.

As always please email me at [marc.thielman@alsea.k12.or.us](mailto:marc.thielman@alsea.k12.or.us), or call/text me directly at 509-220-5313 if you have any concerns or questions. Staff will be rallying at school tomorrow to facilitate this one-week shift to online learning.

I have every expectation, intention, and confidence that regular in-person instruction will resume on Monday November 30th. Go Wolverines!!!!

Sincerely,

**Marc Thielman**

Alsea Superintendent/K-12 Principal

541-487-4305 Ext. 201