



10/28/20

Dear WCS Families,

Thank you for your continued flexibility throughout the course of this year. We recognize and appreciate the efforts you have made so that we can continue to safely offer in-person instruction to our students.

As we continue to plan for e-learning days for this school year, the WCS Board of Trustees has approved two additional scheduled e-learning days on November 30, 2020 (Monday after Thanksgiving Break) and December 18, 2020 (Friday before Christmas Break).

Although many of our students are getting used to taking home devices on a regular basis, we continue to see a need to work with families with their network connectivity. If you are still experiencing concerns, please contact our Director of Technology (Ryan Mattern rmattern@wanee.org or 574-773-4127) for assistance.

As many of you know, the positive cases of COVID-19 in Elkhart County continue to rise at an alarming rate. Based upon the Indiana State Department of Health's Color-Coded Dashboard (<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2393.htm>), Elkhart County has remained in the second highest alert category (Orange) for the past three weeks. If our positive rate continues to climb, we will likely move to Red (highest category) within the next week or two.

Despite our county's increased infections, school data continues to indicate a very low infection rate in our school buildings with less than 1% of our close contacts testing positive during their quarantine period. This is not to say that community spread has not had an impact on our buildings.

I have often said "it takes two types of people to operate schools – students and adults." Currently, we have experienced an incredibly high number of staff members that have been forced to quarantine due to outside exposure or to care for family members. This has made it very difficult for us to find coverage and I fear, as we enter the winter months, finding adequate adult supervision may only become more difficult.

Due to this fact, we will need to implement building-specific e-learning days when it is determined that we do not have enough staffing levels to open one or more of our buildings. If this would occur, we will send out notification to parents as soon as we are able to make this determination which may (at times) include the morning of the e-learning day.

Notification will go to families through our normal means of Skylert calls, text messages, emails, our corporation Facebook page, and through local media. Notification will go to all of our families, but the message will identify the specific school buildings on e-learning for that day. E-learning days will not necessarily cancel extra-curricular activities at the impacted building and participants will be notified later in the day if their activities can continue.

Again, we know this will cause interruptions for families in much the same way as weather-related closures. We apologize in advance if/when these occur. Please know, we will continue to make all possible adjustments to offer in-person learning and will only utilize building specific e-learning days when we are not able to find enough adult supervision.



A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

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Please know, we are continuing to look for substitute teachers, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and nurses. If you or someone you know is willing to help us out this year, please encourage them to apply through our corporation website (<https://www.applitrack.com/wanee/onlineapp/>). Any additional staffing will only help us remain open.

With our county numbers on the rise, it is more important now than ever that everyone follow the same safety protocols that are keeping our infection rates at school so low. These include:

- Wearing a mask when in public spaces
- Washing hands with soap and water frequently or use hand sanitizer
- Maximizing distance between yourself and anyone not in your household
- Staying home when sick or displaying symptoms
- Getting tested if symptomatic or if exposed to someone who has tested positive

Make no mistake, this is going to be a challenging school year. But we can and we will make it if we continue to work TOGETHER on these common goals.

Thank you all once again for your continued effort. If you have questions or needs, please feel welcome to contact your child's school or our administration office.

Sincerely,

Scot D. Croner, PhD
Superintendent
Wa-Nee Community Schools