

October 29, 2020

Laker Family,

This year continues to be challenging for each of us in any number of ways. Decisions, once routine, have become increasingly complicated by a myriad of factors surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic that presently grips our country. Perhaps most frustrating for each of us are the ever-changing guidance and recommendations from federal, state, and local officials which leave so many questioning the validity of decisions rendered.

As we prepared for the 2020-2021 school year back in August, the Calloway County Board of Education took a bold step in allowing in-person classes at a time when guidance and recommendations suggested otherwise. This decision was predicated on the fact that, while we had significant numbers of positive cases in our community, those cases remained largely isolated to specific locations throughout our community verified through contact tracing. The Calloway County School Board and I, working with the local health department and knowing that in-person instruction is what is best for children, made the decision that we would closely monitor case numbers in our schools and community moving forward as we began in-person instruction for the year. We have relied heavily upon local trend data each week and verification from the Calloway County Health Department to make decisions about in-person instruction. What we have seen to date is that our case numbers in our schools have remained surprisingly low and incidences in our community have been effectively contact traced to specific businesses, family events, or other institutions; thus easier to mitigate and control, allowing for us to remain in operation.

In the evening hours of Tuesday, October 27th I received a communication from the Calloway County Health Department that informed me that data was now shifting in Calloway County and that positive Covid-19 cases were not only increasing, but becoming more random in nature throughout our community. Although we have not yet seen increased numbers in our schools, the Calloway County Health Department has asked that we be proactive in mitigating the spread in our community by temporarily closing schools to in-person instruction and suspending all extra-curricular events.

Beginning Monday, November 2, 2020, all extra-curricular events will be suspended in Calloway County Schools and all students will transition to NTI instruction effective Wednesday, November 4th. We will remain on NTI instruction through Friday, November 13th when our situation will be reassessed in consultation with local health officials. While I regret having to make this decision, I'm confident that it is in the best interest of our community at-large and necessary for us to mitigate the virus spread so that it does not enter our school communities in a volatile manner. We will continue to monitor changes in trends and communicate decisions related to schools accordingly. Thank you for your understanding and/or patience as we work this puzzle in conjunction with community health and local leaders.

Respectfully,
Tres Settle, Superintendent
Calloway County Schools

