Friday, November 13, 2020

Due to the recent resurgence of COVID-19, Windham School District is currently facing major fundamental challenges that may force us into a full remote model for an extended period of time. The state’s safety measures to isolate and quarantine any close contact of a positive COVID-19 case has strained our school district’s ability to provide safe, quality, and productive in-person learning. The following items are a brief listing of situational circumstances that are currently compromising our ability to remain open on a daily basis.

- Surrounding districts choosing to go remote which may force our staff who live in these districts to take care of their own children.
- Due to the FFCRA (Family First Corona Virus Response Act) we are unable to provide staff coverage which includes child care restrictions or standard medical leave.
- Due to the increased number of staff member absences related to state mandated quarantine procedures, we are unable to find qualified replacements and substitutes to cover classes and to provide instruction for students.
  - Some teachers are able to teach remotely; however, we still need to provide classroom coverage for the cohort who is in-person.
  - Some teachers are unable to teach remotely due to personal or family illnesses.
- Increased numbers of students being forced into quarantine or isolation requires immediate adjustments in our delivery of curriculum and instruction and by whom.
- Building administrators are being forced to place these students in an “independent study” where no content instruction is being provided due to lack of staff/substitute coverage.

Our philosophy for conducting a hybrid model is to have the students who are in-person receive the same level of in-person learning that they would in a normal year. This means that our teachers may be putting themselves in a position where they are in close contact with our students in order to provide more 1:1 educational assistance when needed. This model naturally puts our educators in a situation that they may be required by the state to quarantine if a positive case is presented in their classroom.

Our administrators, support staff, medical staff, and teachers have spent countless hours, 24/7, organizing and preparing each day’s coverage for in-person learning while working with the NH DHHS in contact tracing and contacting families who may have been exposed. Each case that is presented is an individual and unique case which means each case necessitates countless hours of communication, planning and consultation with the staff, students, and families affected.
Since Halloween (October 31) our school and community at large has seen a significant uptick in community exposure that has been difficult to track and NH DHHS anticipates that this trend may continue. During this time span, the district has accumulated the following active cases within our school community. Our district has a total of nine (9) positive COVID cases. Five (5) positive cases at Golden Brook School, two (2) positive cases at Windham High School, one (1) positive case at Windham Middle School and one (1) positive case at Windham Center School. We also currently have a total of 111 students and staff quarantined between Golden Brook, Center School, Middle School and High School.

We wanted to remind everyone that up to this point, we have had great success in maintaining our quality of education in the hybrid learning model. However, the community impact as of recent has allowed a profound increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, challenging the integrity of our school system. The community adherence to current state and federal guidelines is critical for keeping our schools open for in person services.

As of today, November, 13, 2020, no changes will be made to our current learning model. However, if this trend continues we may be forced to move to a full remote model for the safety of our staff, our children and community. Provided below is the matrix for determining whether school should be in person, hybrid or a remote model according to DHHS guidelines.


Thank you for listening and understanding the difficult challenges we are facing as educational leaders.

Thank you,

Richard Langlois
Superintendent of Schools