

**January 12, 2021**

Dear Fayette County Public Schools families:

Thank you for continuing to support your children with their learning at home while COVID-19 cases in our community have prevented us from returning to the classroom. While it is often said that families are a child's first and best teachers, the Herculean demands placed on our families this year have been astounding. Our teachers and staff have done an exceptional job under difficult circumstances, but nothing can replace the educational benefit of in-person instruction.

The FCPS In-Person Learning Matrix provides a path back to the classroom while prioritizing health and safety. It goes beyond the average daily cases one day a week and allows us to hold in-person learning in the state's red zone by considering other factors like community trends, institutional spread, and cases among students and staff that may override other indicators.

Our average daily cases have been more than 200 for the past nine days, after almost three weeks of a steady decline. In the first 11 days of 2021, we have had 117 students and 63 employees test positive for COVID-19.

Here's where we are:

- We are committed to implementing in-person instruction as soon as conditions warrant.
- We are currently providing limited, individually determined, in-person services to students with special needs.
- Our data indicates we need to continue remote learning the weeks of Jan. 19-22 and Jan. 25-29.
- Our goal is to begin graduated in-person learning the week of Feb. 1-5. The data will determine whether we can begin a phased-in return – starting with grades K-2 and adding other grades in subsequent weeks – for students whose families chose in-person learning, or whether we will offer additional services for smaller groups of students.
- In the next week, you will see our school buses on the road as our drivers and monitors begin practicing their routes in preparation for February.
- We will continue to distribute free meals, support families with basic needs, and provide social emotional and mental health support. For details visit [www.fcps.net/gethelp](http://www.fcps.net/gethelp).

We are touched by the very personal stories many of our families have voiced, and we want you to know that we genuinely share your desire to return to in-person learning. We are approaching the end of that 2½-week post-holiday period where we should begin to trend downward.

We would like nothing more than to announce details next Tuesday for a return to in-person instruction the first of February. With your help and continued support, we can make that possible.

Sincerely,

Marlene Helm,  
Fayette County Public Schools acting superintendent