



Joseph R. Williams, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
1560 Bloomingdale Road
Glendale Heights, IL 60139
Phone: 630/260-6100 Fax: 630/260-6103
www.queenbee16.org

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Dear Queen Bee 16 Families,

I hope that this email finds you well. I would like to take a moment to update you on the public health metrics that we have been using to guide us as we navigate our way through this global pandemic. As you know, the metrics that we use to move forward always lag by one week. The Illinois Department of Public Health collects this data and then shares this data with local health departments, who, in turn, confirm its accuracy and update their local guidance. I independently track the data from the Illinois Department of Public Health, in addition to the Zip Code Analysis provided by Northwestern University and our own measures of student absences, staff absences, and quarantines for each group.

We are seeing significant increases in the daily cases per 100,000 residents across the county and within our Zip Code. Additionally, we track each case or suspected case of students and employees of our district, and we are seeing an uptick there as well.

The good news is that our mitigation efforts within the school district appear to be effective. We have experienced no cases of student to student, teacher to student, or student to teacher during our first month of Hybrid operation. However, we have had employees and students quarantine due to confirmed or suspected exposure, and we have had both students and teachers test positive. The reality is that we are indeed in a global pandemic of a novel virus and that our experience within the district is connected to the public health conditions of the communities in which we all live and the community that we serve.

There is a high degree of likelihood that the increases that we have been tracking in the cases per 100,000 will result in a number greater than 100, which would shift our model from Orange to Red. I briefed the COVID Safety Team on this possibility yesterday and the Administrative Team today. **In the event that the metrics shift to Red, I will pause our Hybrid Program beginning on Monday, October 19th, until the public health data supports In-person instruction.** Our plan is built to accommodate this pause, and that is the reason that we established our Remote Learning Plan from our first day.

I understand that there may be some disappointment or frustration in the event that we need to pause our Hybrid Program until the metrics indicate a lower level of risk for both students and teachers. This pandemic has provided ample opportunities for all of us to be frustrated. However, I am committed to the physical safety of our students, teachers, and staff members and offering In-person Instruction when the public health metrics indicate that it is safe to do so.

The mission of Queen Bee Schools is to set high standard to ensure that all students learn, grow and achieve.

Please feel free to contact your Principal if you have questions, as they will be sharing further detail based on the decision that tomorrow brings. As always, feel free to contact me directly if you have a question, insight to share, or a concern that requires my attention. Thank you for your continued patience and partnership as we work together to provide an outstanding education for each student.

Thank you,

Joseph R. Williams, Ed. D.

Superintendent