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Superintendent: School District Might Return to Remote Learning as Omicron Variant Spreads More COVID-19 in Darien

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While there's been no decision made, Darien schools may again change from in-school teaching to remote learning because of the "significant increase in COVID-19 cases" in Darien and the region, schools Superintendent Alan Addley said Tuesday — but he added that doing so is "unlikely."

"Over the next few days, as prudent planning, the District will make any necessary preparations in the unlikely event the District needs to transition to remote learning after the break," Addley wrote in a message sent to school district staff and parents of students. "This will include students taking home their devices and any potential remote learning materials on Thursday as they leave for break."

The winter break is scheduled to end on Monday, Jan. 3, the earliest day that the district might switch to remote learning, largely conducted over the Internet.

The increase in COVID-19 cases is "most attributable" to spread across the community rather than in schools, Addley said.

"To reiterate, there has been no decision made for the district to go to remote learning and doing so would require the support and /or a directive from our local health officials, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the Department of Public Health," Addley said. "The CSDE ultimately grants the permission for remote learning days to count towards school days." Addley didn't indicate the Darien Board of Education has any say in the decision.

He said parents and staff can expect "a brief follow-up communication" on any decision on whether or not to conduct teaching over the Internet on Thursday, Dec. 30.

Full Text of Addley's Message

Dear Parents & Staff,

As the winter break draws near we are seeing a significant increase in COVID-19 cases, still most attributable to community spread.

Over the next few days, as prudent planning, the District will make any necessary preparations in the unlikely event the District needs to transition to remote learning after the break. This will include students taking home their devices and any potential remote learning materials on Thursday as they leave for break. Therefore, if the need to transition to remote learning is determined, the District will be ready to pivot to remote learning on Monday, Jan. 3.

To reiterate, there has been no decision made for the District to go to remote learning and doing so would require the support and /or a directive from our local health officials, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the Department of Public Health. The CSDE ultimately grants the permission for remote learning days to count towards school days.

The preparations for remote learning are simply being prudent should we need or be required to change our practices over the holiday break or shortly thereafter.

You can expect a brief follow-up communication on Thursday, Dec. 30 confirming the learning model for Monday, Jan. 3.

Thank you for your continued partnership with the District during these challenging times.

Wishing your family a safe and happy holiday season.

Alan Addley, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools