

River Bend Families,

The administration, teachers and Board of Education continue to review our Covid data and monitor the data from our region. While Whiteside County continues to see rising cases and has a positivity rate of 24%, Fulton and Albany continue to remain steady at a positivity rate between 11% and 13%. The important metric that schools consider is our school positive student/teacher cases and the number of student/teacher quarantines.

Why would our schools need to close? This answer is complex and has many factors.

1. A large number of students or teachers with positive covid cases. If we could not find enough substitute teachers to cover classes we would have to consider a short term remote learning phase.
2. A large number of quarantined students/teachers. This is a man power issue, if we do not have enough coverage in the classrooms, we would need to consider going remote for a period of time.
3. Whiteside County Health Department or IL Dept. of Public Health Mandate- The Whiteside County Health Department supports schools remaining open and feels that having students at school may be safer as long as students and families continue wearing masks, washing hands, social distancing and communicating exposure/symptoms. So far schools are not spreading the virus, WCHD sees small gatherings as the biggest spreading events.

Will the schools close before or after Thanksgiving and Christmas?

- Currently the WCHD is deferring to schools to make this decision. Based on our current positive student/staff rates being very low, the schools do not plan on closing after the Thanksgiving Holiday. The Christmas/New Year holiday plans are not fully determined. Throughout the month of December, we will continue to monitor and evaluate a plan for the return on January 5th. If between now and Thanksgiving a covid positive spike were to occur we would reevaluate our decision.

Please be cautious over the Thanksgiving Holiday

- If you or anyone in your family has symptoms that follow any family gatherings please do not send your child to school. If you travel out of the area to a hotspot, please consider a short self-quarantine. If symptoms arise after traveling please do not send your children to school. **I am attaching the IDPH holiday guidance document.**

Other attached documents- I have been asked to share documents that have community benefit. Mercy One is seeking community input on a survey. The Schmaling Library is seeking to inform community members about services during pandemic.