



Larry A. Hewitt, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

January 25, 2021

Dear District 28 Families:

Our main goal for this unconventional school year is to provide an excellent educational experience for all students while maintaining safe operations using several mitigation strategies. Quarantine after travel is one of the key mitigation strategies we use. While we have had individuals throughout the year report that they are COVID-19 positive, we have not had a single outbreak in any of our schools. We will continue to deploy all of our strategies to increase the chances that we can continue to offer in-person instruction.

My initial communication regarding spring break indicated that we would be in session. While that is still my preference, it became apparent that a survey would provide additional information and insight, while also allowing for the broadest range of voices to be heard.

Our recent survey of families shows that 33% are planning to travel out-of-state, with 57.5% indicating they are in support of a temporary pivot to remote learning and 42.5% opposing it. The following reasons have led to my decision to pivot to remote learning for the nine instructional days immediately following spring break:

- Splitting up our onsite students - one-third in quarantine (roughly 500) and two-thirds onsite - will negatively impact the overall pacing of instruction for the whole class when quarantined students return. It will create significant instructional challenges for our teachers, as well as result in inequitable learning among our students. However, by having everyone in the same instructional environment (remote), our teachers will be able to provide a well-planned set of learning experiences, discussions, and activities for all students, while keeping everyone on pace.

Some have asked about students Zooming in from home. Our teachers have no experience managing remote and on-site learning simultaneously, and our classrooms are not set up with the proper equipment for that instructional model. This would simply create a less efficient, more inadequate learning experience for all students. On the

other hand, our teachers do have experience and success leading remote learning.

- The remote learning time will provide additional precautions to protect our school community. Similar to the pivot to remote after winter break, this will put us in the best position from a safety/health standpoint to finish the year in-person.
- The temporary pivot to remote involves nine instructional days (Friday, April 2 is a non-attendance day), significantly shorter than the 5-week period.
- There is overwhelming support for the pivot to remote from our teachers and support staff (94.5%), who are on the front line with our students every day, as well as a majority of parents (57.5%) who support it.

While my preference would be to continue with in-person instruction, the pandemic is still with us. We all continue to find ourselves in situations that are not of our making, trying to solve problems that require trade-offs we'd rather not have to make.

This temporary pivot to remote will be canceled if Cook County's travel quarantine is eliminated or if a significant number of states and/or countries are removed from the list. If that occurs, students who travel to locations that are not removed from the list will be required to quarantine for 14 days.

The District's focus in this unusual year is unchanged: we are working diligently to provide an excellent education for all children and do it in as safe a manner as possible for everyone. I appreciate your patience as we work through yet another frustrating challenge.

Sincerely,

Larry A. Hewitt, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools