



November 13, 2020

Dear ECASD Staff and Families,

Over the past few weeks, school and district administration has been closely monitoring COVID-19 data and its impact on our schools and community. In recent days, and more currently illustrated in Governor Evers' announcement this week, the number of cases has continued to increase dramatically in our state and region.

While student COVID cases and quarantines across the school district are well below our internal thresholds, our staff absences due to the virus are significantly affecting our ability to sustain our blended instructional model. School staff and administration have worked creatively and tirelessly to substitute for colleagues. We have been leveraging our District Office personnel to assist in schools, as well.

We expect additional staff absences in the future because of the newly available community antigen testing site at Memorial High School. This increase in staff absences will soon require a shift to our 100% virtual instructional model. We must be flexible and proactive in our approach to this transition so student learning may continue.

As a result of these circumstances, we must make a short-term change in our instructional model from blended to 100% virtual starting Monday, November 30, 2020. This transition will last through at least Tuesday, December 8, 2020, for all District students.

With the timing of this announcement, we hope to give families a two-week notice to arrange for childcare and other needs. We know this is disappointing news. However, the health, safety, and well-being of our school community remains our top priority. We are aligned with expert health guidance to ensure we are doing everything we can to minimize risk and ensure the learning process can continue.

ECASD will continue to examine and monitor multiple community and school factors and collaborate with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department and other medical experts. **We will then determine an extension or adjustment to this short-term instructional model change by Tuesday, December 1. However, it is quite possible that the 100% virtual instructional model for all ECASD students may continue beyond December 8.**

Below is how our District schedule will look over the next few weeks:

Monday, November 16 – Friday, November 20	Current blended instructional model continues Principals communicate details of the blended instructional model transition to 100% virtual instructional model
Monday, November 23	(No School) Family/Teacher Conferences (all levels – held virtually)
Tuesday, November 24 - Friday, November 27	(No School) Thanksgiving Break
Monday, November 30 - Tuesday, December 8	100% virtual instructional model for students in grades PK-12
Tuesday, December 1	Decision made to resume 100% virtual instructional model or reinstate blended instructional model
Thursday, December 10	Earliest date possible to return to blended instructional model



It is extremely important to note that continued increases in staff or student cases may lead to additional instructional model changes in the future. Our staff desires to provide the best and most consistent educational experience, regardless of the model, and we need your help to take extreme care with any future travel or gatherings. Please continue to wash your hands and wear your mask to further assist us in returning to our blended instructional model as soon as possible.

Schools are reflections of the community. Our ECASD schools have been safe places thus far thanks to the efforts of our students and staff. District and school-level administration will follow up with more details on this transition to our 100% virtual instructional model in the coming days. Thank you so much for your patience and support as we navigate our way through the challenges of the pandemic.

Sincerely,
Mike Johnson, ECASD Superintendent
Dr. Tim Nordin, ECASD School Board President