



September 18, 2020

Dear Center Cass Parents and Guardians –

First and foremost, it was a great week inside our schools. Kudos to you and your children. Below are a few indicators:

- Following our first reported case last Thursday, we have gone a week now without another. Doesn't mean we won't need to work through cases in the future, but for now, the vast majority of students and staff are in fantastic health!
- Attendance has been great. Few kids each day are being sent home, but you, our parents, have responded appropriately by either providing a doctor's note with an alternative diagnosis, a negative COVID-19 test, or staying at home for the mandatory 14-day quarantine.
- Students are entering the buildings happy, enjoying their time in-person or remotely, and have a great attitude about persevering through the pandemic.
- Students are adjusting to the longer in-person school day just fine and are doing better with the 3 W's (watching their distance, wearing their masks properly, and washing/sanitizing).

With that said, the extended schedule has brought about some challenges where we need some help, for example:

- While attendance has been really good, student engagement has not been as good in all classes. In other words, students are remoting in during the afternoons, but not all students are putting forth the effort to learn and contribute. Please ask your child to demonstrate what they learned, check their progress report, and contact the teacher with any concerns.
- With students becoming more accustomed to the 3 W's, we should be seeing a shift of energy from the stress of being masked, distanced, and washing/sanitizing, to a greater focus on academic learning. Some students are able to get beyond the 3W's and shift their energy to academic learning, others are not. This is not only a problem for the student who isn't learning as well, but becomes increasingly difficult for the teacher, as there is constant redirection and catching others up. Please have a conversation with your child about how the 3 W's are impacting their energy levels and learning. Check in on your child from time to time when they are remote learning to ensure they are paying attention. Also, please ask your student to spend a little time each weekend reviewing last week's learning and preparing for the upcoming week.
- Although bussing has gone extremely well, we are hearing from some parents and students that the window between school dismissal from the hybrid model and the full remote model in the afternoon is too short, especially at Lakeview. In other words, some students do not have enough time to get home, eat lunch, use the restroom, decompress from the 3 Ws, set up their laptops, and remote in. We are reviewing these situations and may need to tweak the schedule.
- The new extended schedule provides limited opportunities for grade level teachers to work together on planning. We are short on substitutes and trying to ensure that students get quality one-on-one time with actual teachers, however, the one-on-one time won't be as high quality if we don't find time for our teachers to plan collaboratively. The materials, routines, and techniques of the past don't fit well in this new environment. We greatly appreciate the time during the SMART start, as well as the Remote Plan Days, just know that our teachers might need an afternoon from time to time in future weeks to plan. Students would be doing more "independent work" during those times. More details to follow.

The highlights and areas of growth above are natural and real. Students, parents, employees are operating in a whole new school world, and there is no blame, just collective improvements needed. I have been pleased with the patience, flexibility, commitment, and grace everyone is affording each other. We will continue to identify, improve, and take another step forward. A new survey for parents and employees will be released next week to gain valuable feedback on our extended day schedule.

New County COVID-19 data will be released today or tomorrow, but preliminary data shows that numbers improved a bit and IDPH might upgrade the County back to Blue. Please continue to be safe. Please adhere to CDC travel guidance as well, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>. Lastly, if your child will not be at school, please call your student in as soon as you are able so we can be prepared. Please keep communicating with your teachers, principals, and Admin. We are all in this together. Thanks for being a great team member. Have a safe and restful weekend.

Dr. Wise