

## **LPS Shifts to Temporary Remote Learning Districtwide Next Week**

LPS Parents, Students and Community Members:

**All LPS schools and programs will move to a temporary remote learning model next week.**

The [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment \(CDPHE\)](#) and [Tri-County Health](#) moved Arapahoe County from “Level Yellow: Safer at Home - Concern” to “Level Orange: Safer at Home - High Risk” on [the state’s dial dashboard](#), effective today at 5:00 p.m. While this change doesn’t mandate that schools shift to remote learning, it does provide additional evidence about the spread of COVID in our community.

As I have said in numerous settings, our goal is to have students of all ages in school for in-person learning as much as is safely possible and to move individual schools to temporary remote learning as needed while keeping other schools open for in-person learning. We will have completed 12 weeks of in-person/hybrid school since August 24, which is fantastic. I’ve heard from many students, teachers and parents that the best learning takes place when teachers and students can be together in person. Students have benefited from the social interaction with their peers and have developed a sense of community. We are grateful for our students, teachers and families whose attention to health protocols made it possible to have in-person learning for this long.

The [LPS COVID Tracker](#) provides us with important information. Since August 24, we have learned more about contact tracing, quarantines and the ability of schools to keep COVID positive cases low. LPS data and Arapahoe County data have been examined over time. We have had about 140 positive COVID cases and about 90 quarantines among 16,000 students and staff since our first day of school. This is remarkably low and a true testament to the commitment of our students, teachers, employees and families to follow health protocols and properly quarantine to prevent spread in order to keep more students in school as much as possible.

As Arapahoe County’s numbers increase, LPS numbers eventually also increase. In the past few days, LPS has reached the tipping point in the system where in-person learning is no longer feasible.

- After today, the LPS COVID Tracker shows 14 days in the “remote learning” category, which demonstrates a sustained change of increased COVID positivity not only in our community but also in our schools.
- Now that Arapahoe County is in the Level Orange high risk category, Tri-County Health has reverted back to [Standard Contact Identification](#), which requires LPS to cast larger nets in each quarantine, meaning more students and staff will be quarantined with each identified positive case and the burden on LPS for contact tracing becomes unmanageable. Tri-County Health can no longer offer us support as they, too, are at capacity managing contact tracing in the community.

- The staffing/substitute shortage is getting worse. Keeping enough staff in schools for supervision is becoming a real concern. It is especially difficult, and impossible on some days, to have enough licensed teachers in classrooms delivering quality instruction. There are more absences due to colds and flu, as well. Our teachers and all of our school-based staff have done a truly outstanding job, taking on a much heavier workload since August. As quarantines increase, the stress and anxiety across the entire system is becoming unmanageable.
- The rate of transmission is increasing across the system. It is likely we would be unable to continue transportation services in a matter of days.
- We recently needed to move a number of individual schools and programs to temporary remote learning (Littleton High School, Heritage High School, Options Secondary and the NOVA program) due to staffing shortages and case count increases. We anticipate more schools will need to do so in the next few days.

After consulting with school and district leaders and the LPS Board of Education, and taking all of the above factors into consideration, **I made the decision to move all LPS schools and programs to a temporary remote learning model beginning next week, possibly for the rest of the fall semester.**

- **Monday, November 16, 2020 will be a non-student day for all LPS students** in order to give teachers, school staff, and families a day to prepare for the transition to temporary remote learning.
- **Beginning Tuesday, November 17, 2020 and expected through Friday, December 18, 2020 (which is the end of the fall semester), all LPS students will learn remotely from their classroom teacher.**
- For now, we will plan to return in January to the schedule we have been in since last August (preschool in-person based on student schedule; K–5 in-person five days a week; middle, high school and Transition Services hybrid). Staff would return January 4, 2021, and students would return Tuesday, January 5, 2021, as indicated on the [district calendar](#).
- We will continue to monitor the data every day. If staffing conditions improve and the rate of positivity decreases, we would consider bringing students and staff back for in-person learning in December if it is safe to do so. We will keep you informed as we continue to monitor all of the variables.
- It will be important that you continue to report COVID exposures and cases to your school so that we can continue to monitor student and staff data even while we are in a remote learning model. More information will be coming from your school.
- Child care will not be available at preschools or elementary schools during the period of remote learning.
- Free meals will continue to be provided for all students in our district. Details can be found at [www.lpsnutrition.com](http://www.lpsnutrition.com)

Please look for a communication from your individual school(s) for important details.

I invite you to learn more about the [LPS COVID Tracker](#) and our [LPS Learning Models](#). There are some helpful resources on the [Coronavirus Updates](#) page and through the [Family Academy](#).

While we wish we could have given families more time to prepare for this shift, with as quickly as quarantines are increasing, it is likely that many of our schools would have needed to make the shift to remote learning by next week anyway. We know many parents and staff have been planning ahead for this possibility and we truly appreciate everyone's flexibility and patience.

I want to thank all of you again for your efforts to follow our health protocols, which have allowed us to have in-person learning for 12 weeks this fall. While a temporary shift to remote learning is not what is best for students' learning and social-emotional needs, it is necessary at this time to keep our students, staff, families and fellow community members safe during this COVID surge in our area. It remains our collective responsibility to keep one another safe during these unprecedented times. Please continue to wear your mask, wash your hands and physically distance when possible. We hope to have all of our students and staff back in school for in-person learning again in January, or sooner if possible.

Warm Regards,

Brian Ewert  
*Superintendent*