



January 12, 2022

Pelham Family,

As promised, we are monitoring our COVID-19 cases and absences closely, and the Omicron variant is proving to be as widespread as predicted by our health professionals.

While we're making every effort to cover staffing absences caused by isolation or quarantine, we are reaching levels that make it difficult to operate normally. Additionally, the metrics we established to move to Mitigation Level 3 have been met. Based on discussions at the board of education meeting last Thursday and the information emailed to parents and employees last Friday, we will enact another level of mitigation efforts that might slow the spread and allow us to keep our schools open. Therefore, I am announcing the following plans:

1. We have a scheduled holiday on Monday, January 17. **We are now also going to add Tuesday, January 18 as a REMOTE learning day.** This will give us four consecutive days, Saturday through Tuesday, to help slow the spread and time to gain back several staff members who are affected by isolation or quarantine.
2. Mitigation efforts at Level 3 will include required face coverings for a short time period. **We will begin requiring face coverings immediately, effective Thursday, January 13 through Friday, January 21.** We need everyone to mask up in an effort to help slow the spread. The face coverings requirement will be reevaluated at the end of next week.

As noted in the revised mitigation levels that were shared last week, we acknowledge that face coverings are a controversial topic and some sources cite that properly fitted N-95 masks are the most effective as a barrier to the Omicron variant. However, our local medical experts still advocate that while not foolproof, face coverings do provide some level of mitigation. In our current situation, even if we can reduce transmissions by half or a third, it will help in our efforts to keep schools open.

Please note that we are only making a short-term commitment to Mitigation Level 3 at this time. It is our hope that the spike in COVID-19 cases recedes soon and that we can manage staffing issues in the short term.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through the challenges and work together to keep our schools open.

Be safe and stay well,

Dr. Scott Coefield  
Superintendent  
Pelham City Schools