

New Hampshire School Administrative Unit #15

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William J. Rearick

Superintendent of Schools

Margaret W. Polak

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January 15, 2021

Dear Auburn Village School Families and Staff,

It has come to my attention that some parents would like additional clarification as to why AVS shifted to remote learning for two weeks. Keeping our students and staff members safe and healthy has been the school district's primary goal since we reopened in the fall. Over the summer, the Reentry to School Committee researched the best practices that were recommended by the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These practices were incorporated into the AVS' Reentry to School Plan which was adopted in August by the Auburn School Board. The Board also made it a priority to try to keep our students in school as long as we could maintain the adopted guidelines.

Several factors were considered in making the recent decision to shift to remote learning for two weeks from 1/11/21 through 1/22/21. The first was based on having an increased number of positive COVID-19 cases within a short time-frame, the second was the high positivity rates of COVID-19 in Rockingham County as well as in the neighboring counties of Hillsborough and Merrimack, and the third and most impactful was the difficulty in finding an adequate number of substitutes for classroom teachers.

On 1/4/21, the first day back from winter break, AVS experienced a higher than typical number (seven) of teacher/staff absences, with most being COVID related. This pattern continued for much of the week and was followed by six positive cases reported between 1/7/21 and 1/11/21. There was also a high 7-day Positivity Rate for COVID-19 in our neighboring communities of Candia, Derry, Hooksett, and Manchester. We were concerned that we would see an increase in the number of reported cases if we were to continue with the in-person instructional model. By switching to remote learning we were being proactive in trying to limit the spread of COVID-19 at AVS.

Each day, Principal Collins and I monitor the COVID positivity rates in Auburn, Rockingham County and surrounding areas. In addition to monitoring this information, we continually review teacher and student attendance data. The DHHS has advised districts that they need to take these guidelines into consideration but that they are not mandatory. For example, a district may meet a number of the metrics contained in the guidelines which indicate that a school district should stay open, but they may have to shift their instructional model because they may have difficulty staffing their schools.

The Auburn School Board, Principal Collins, the AVS faculty/staff and I have worked diligently throughout this school year to provide in-person and remote learning models to meet the needs of our students and families. When positive COVID cases have been reported, we tried to reduce the impact to in-person learning by switching to remote learning for select classes and grade levels when

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possible. Unfortunately, due to a higher than normal demand for substitute teachers, there have been times that we have had to shift to the remote learning model for all students. The Auburn School district community is committed to providing a consistent in-person learning model. We will do so as long as adequate staffing levels and health and safety protocols can be maintained. We thank you all for your ongoing support and commitment to the Auburn Village School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William J. Rearick".

William J. Rearick
Superintendent of Schools