

Dear WCSD Family,

We just experienced a historic General Election with record-breaking voter turnout. As educators and Americans, regardless of your political affiliation, we should celebrate this civic responsibility that is a testament to the foundations of Democracy and our country.

- On Friday evening, I sent a message to all students, families and staff, urging everyone to avoid large social gatherings where large groups of individuals were present. **As a community, we are experiencing a high number of positive COVID cases and potential exposures.** The surge in community spread is what is causing our District to have an increase in the number of cases in our schools and two schools moving to full distance learning until November 30. Please limit your interactions to only your household members or to only what is necessary. Always wear a face covering and maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance to others whenever you are in public. Please self-screen for symptoms before you enter any Washoe County School District building. If you are excluded, positive, waiting for results, or exhibiting COVID-like symptoms, please self-isolate and don't go out.
- We share the **school-based COVID-19 cases** that have been confirmed by the Washoe County Health District [on this webpage](#), and as always you can review our **WCSD COVID Data Dashboard** on our [homepage](#). This website is updated three times a week with data from the WCHD; there is lag in these numbers, so please, if you know of a case that hasn't appeared on the school data and if it doesn't show, email [covidquestions@washoeschools.net](mailto:covidquestions@washoeschools.net)
- We received information this week from the Nevada Department of Education, which clarifies how we will handle education on snow days. **Distance Learning will NOT be implemented on snow days.** This is due to the [Governor's emergency directive 022](#), which does not allow distance learning for reasons that are unrelated to health. This clarification is why we are permitted to move to distance learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as smoke days earlier in the year that heavily affected air quality. If there is a need to close school buildings due to natural disaster, inclement weather, accident, or any other extraordinary circumstance that does not interact with health and safety protocols put in place to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, districts and schools are expected to use contingency days at the end of the school year. We do hope that many of our days with inclement weather will be handled by utilizing a two-hour delay, but if there is a particularly hazardous storm or icy conditions, we will have a traditional snow day and use one of the contingency days at the end of our school year calendar. There will be an FAQ document that we will provide to answer questions for our staff, families and students.

- As of October 13, 33 percent of our students have been **chronically absent** from school – including distance learning, hybrid, and in-person learning models. This a highly concerning number and we will be undergoing major efforts districtwide to remedy this situation. Studies show that chronically absent students are more likely to disengage from school altogether and we all know that the pandemic continues to affect how our students attend school, from access to technology for distance learning to taking adult responsibilities to support their families. Our schools are working to contact these students and requesting the assistance of our Intervention Department to help visit these students’ homes (following all safety and health protocols) to identify challenges and provide supports to get them back into school. We will continue to work on a communications campaign to connect with our students and assist them in being present, engaged, and supported. We want every student to feel welcome, accepted, and supported at school. Each one of us in this District needs to do all that we can to ensure our students are engaged.
  
- We have a lengthy agenda at this week’s **Board Meeting this Tuesday** that will cover many important topics. You can access the agenda [here](#). The meeting will begin at 2 p.m. at Galena High School. Some items that we anticipate will have an increased interest of the public, employees, students and families, will not take place until after 4 p.m.
  - **Trustees** will receive [updated information](#) related to the financial state of our Nutrition Services Department and its enterprise fund, including meal trends, updated fiscal and staffing implications based on these trends, status of employee negotiations with employee associations and more. During the pandemic, WCSD had been losing \$700,000 per month because 60 percent fewer meals are being taken by students. Thanks to a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture we have increased our average daily meal count from about 19,000 in September to more than 32,000 in October. We also have seen a substantial increase in our distance learning families using meal distribution sites. This was averaging about 500 families picking up 7,000 meals per week in September to last we expecting to serve 3,600 families 50,400 meals. We are hopeful that this will have a positive impact and potentially reduce the amount of cuts needed in nutrition services.
  
  - **Board Policy 1310—Political Activity in Schools** will be discussed and any possible action would include the Policy being sent to the Board Policy Committee.

- As a standing item on every agenda, the Board will review case incidents in schools, and other data indicators used to **assess COVID-19 community risk** to include but not limited to completed risk assessment forms, test positivity, community-wide case rates and hospitalizations, and can make decisions and recommendations based on that data.
- The Board will make decisions on the zoning for Michael Inskeep Elementary School in the Cold Springs area, following the recommendations of the zoning committee

**Thank you again for the fantastic news you continue to submit. If you haven't yet seen your submission, it will be in soon! Please submit your bright spots to [goodnews@washoeschools.net](mailto:goodnews@washoeschools.net)**

- The **10th Annual WCS D Holiday Card Design Competition** has begun! Each year, it is a joy for me to see the artwork of our creative and talented students in each of our schools. Submissions may be an original painting, drawing, digital artwork, or photograph and must have a non-religious holiday theme. All entries must be received in the Office of Communications and Community Engagement by November 24 at 4:00 p.m. Along with the winner's beautiful artwork being shared with our community, the top three overall winners will receive prizes and recognition at the December 8 Board of Trustees meeting! I encourage you to rally your students and participate in this annual competition. [Click here](#) for details on the submission requirements. I am always encouraged to see the positive and beautiful artwork created by our kids, and I hope your classes will participate.
- Our District will be hosting **Virtual Passport to High School Success Family Nights on November 17, November 19, and November 23 for eighth grade students and their families, providing them** with information about the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and Signature Academies. These virtual events will offer an overview of the different high school opportunities, including how to apply. Learn more about the programs available and sign up for the [Family Nights here](#).
- I received a very positive message from a parent at **Hunsberger Elementary** about the fantastic job **Mrs. Gina Derryman** is doing with the 2nd grade distance learning class: "My daughter is loving this year with her as a teacher. Mrs. Derryman's enthusiasm and organization make the class fun and flow well each day to help encourage learning. We have had such a positive experience... This year is

challenging for all teachers, but I believe that the distance learning teachers deserve our utmost respect and recognition. They are working in uncharted territory with all eyes on them, and I for one couldn't be more pleased with how Mrs. Derryman is handling that. I know it is not easy for her to daily deal with the struggles of technology, a huge class size and teaching remotely, but she does it with passion and grace." Thank you to all of our teachers navigating the waters of distance learning this year.

Take care,  
Kristen