



School District of Pickens County

Building success beyond the classroom



November 17, 2020

Dear Parent,

Ever since our district began to announce our plans for Returning to Learning this summer, we have been clear about our desire to have in-person school as much as possible. All of our school staff--teachers, nurses, custodians, administrators and more--have been working extremely hard to create school environments where it was difficult for the virus to spread. For the most part, they have been successful.

However, our plans for in-person school rely on the availability of enough students and staff to be able to operate schools effectively. For this, we rely not only on the safe environments of our schools but on our surrounding community's effort to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Over the past two weeks, the number of students and employees who are under state-mandated quarantine orders has increased rapidly. As of the writing of this email, 440 students and 50 staff members are under active quarantine due to having caught or come in close contact with COVID-19. As we investigate each of these cases, what we have found is that the vast majority of close contacts have occurred outside of school. **We cannot control activities outside of school and need your help.**

COVID-19 cases are currently surging in Pickens County. [According to data from the S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control](#), the current 7-day average of cases for our county hit its highest point ever yesterday, and we have one of the highest infection rates per capita of any county in the state. Data by ZIP code for our county also reveals that the surge is not limited to one community--it is widespread.

As our school staff works extremely hard each day to make our school environment safe, I would ask that you respect those efforts by taking precautions in the community as well. Specifically, you can help in five ways:

1. Wear a mask in public.
2. Avoid large indoor gatherings.
3. Stay home/keep your child home when sick.
4. Get tested immediately if you display [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
5. Communicate with your child's principal or school nurse if your child or someone in your home has been exposed to COVID-19.

Our ability to continue in-person school depends on getting the virus under control in our community. Our parents and community members have been excellent partners in making the best of a difficult school year. I can't think of any community that has handled the challenge better than you at the start of this year. Please help us keep up the effort to bring our schools and community back to normal.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Daniel B. Mueh'.

Superintendent's Office

1348 Griffin Mill Road • Easley, SC 29640-6997 • P 864-397-1000 • F 864-850-5205

www.pickens.k12.sc.us

Danny Merck
SDPC Superintendent