

Dear Patriot Families,

I am reaching out to update you on our school district's plan for instruction over the next few weeks. I have continued to participate in weekly meetings with our Clinton County Health Department Officials, local Superintendents, and almost daily with our Administrative Team. We continue to discover that currently there are no easy answers with COVID and that no matter what direction we go there are consequences to our decisions. Therefore, I feel obligated to continue to follow the data and the recommendations from our health experts and remain focused on the safety of all as we move forward.

I have decided that all AVCS students will remain under remote instruction for an additional 4 school days beyond the originally planned return date of January 19th. Our new goal will be to hopefully return to our hybrid plan model starting on Monday, January 25th. Additionally, please note that CVES has also announced their move to remote instruction for the next two weeks meaning that any AVCS student attending BOCES or CV-Tech will also be under remote instruction with an anticipated return date of Monday, January 25th as well.

As you are aware, the new anticipated return date mentioned above for AVCS will be entirely dependent on further information that we receive from the County regarding COVID cases in our area. This could be further extended. We will continue to analyze the data thoroughly and will review at our weekly meetings with the Clinton County Health Department. We will do our best to make informed decisions with the ultimate goal of ensuring the safety of all we serve.

**Below are some of the key factors in my decision making:**

- The continued and significant rise in positive COVID-19 cases in our county (1/5 -96, 1/6-72, 1/7-50, 1/8-62). We have had several positive cases in our own school community as well as many people currently under quarantine orders. If we were in-person, these would have made an impact on both our instruction and our support services (i.e., transportation).
- CCHD reports that we are only seeing the beginning of the surge caused by celebrations around the 24th and 25th of December. They are still waiting to see the full effect of the surge from Christmas and New Years' celebrations.
- Both CCHD and ECHD have been very open and honest in saying that they are overwhelmed by the number of cases and in fact are several days behind in the communication of quarantine orders to individuals required to quarantine. This could easily translate to people entering our buildings that should be under quarantine.
- As I'm sure that you've seen in the local news, CVPH has entered their "disaster level surge" process. This means that they are extremely concerned about the number of ICU beds available moving forward.

- CCHD has recommended that schools remain under remote instruction for at least the next couple of weeks. This will allow them to analyze the data from a potential and probable Christmas/New Years' surge.
- We have referenced New York's Microzone Cluster initiative in the past (yellow, orange and red). Local school districts were recently informed that the State is no longer adhering to the initial metrics for classifying areas under this initiative. Under the past criteria, Clinton County would have been a red zone, starting last week; Essex County would have been an orange zone. The requirements for Clinton County to exit this classification would have been a 10-day period of decline in the positivity rate and a 3-day positivity rate of less than 4%. Our positivity rate was most recently measured at more than double that standard. This would have closed our schools for an extended amount of time.

Each decision to place the district under fully remote instruction has been excruciating. We are very aware of the negative impact this model of education can have and has had on our students. These are decisions I do not take lightly but do believe that our best course of action currently is to continue to utilize the data shown above, along with recommendations from our health experts to lead my decision-making process.

We recognize that these are very difficult times for everyone. I am confident that prioritizing everyone's health and safety is of the utmost importance. On a positive note, we are now starting to see progress towards a vaccine roll out. Now is the time to stay committed. It is important that we continue to follow the guidelines as illustrated by our health care officials as we are currently seeing the negative results of those guidelines not being followed over the holiday season. It's going to take all of us and we will get there together.

Please note, if you are already receiving meals, we will be updating that delivery schedule soon and you do not need to contact us again in order to continue receiving meals. If you would like to be added to the list, please remember that all children under 18-years old are eligible, please contact Chelley Martineau at [patriotmeals@avcsk12.org](mailto:patriotmeals@avcsk12.org).

I want to thank this entire community once again for your support and cooperation during this time of crisis. I know that I can say with confidence that all AVCS educators want nothing more than a return to in-person instruction. We remain committed to achieving that goal and optimistic that much better days are ahead for us all.

Respectfully,

Paul D Savage II  
AVCS Superintendent