



September 27, 2020

Dear Parents:

The Little Rock School District values you as a partner in our shared commitment to ensure that all students have the best educational outcomes. We are sending this letter to you because we have been made aware today of a decision by the Little Rock Education Association to not provide in-person instruction starting tomorrow, September 28, 2020. As we have stated previously, we understand that our parents need our schools to be open and we are committed to doing everything we can to avoid disruption to the learning environment.

We are grateful to report that we have no additional positive cases to share today. Additionally, the Arkansas Department of Health shows the latest rate of new cases for a 14-day period is now down to 14 positive COVID cases per 10K residents in the LRSD community. (Residents means students, staff, parents and community within the Little Rock School District boundary). Since the beginning of this school year, we have taken several steps to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our students and staff, including:

- Providing and encouraging the use of masks for all students and staff (Purchased over **3-Million** masks)
- Implementing COVID screenings for staff at each building
- Maintaining clean buildings with daily disinfecting protocols
- Working with our Point of Contact team and the Arkansas Department of Health daily to identify cases, as well as notify and provide contact tracing and quarantine information to impacted students and employees
- Moving to virtual learning when numbers dictated that approach, erring on the side of caution so school site could be safe
- Providing daily public information regarding schools that are impacted

We are taking additional steps to continue in-person instruction this week. **All schools will be open, buses will run, and meals will be served. We still expect a large number of our dedicated teaching staff to be present, as well as Central Office staff, and substitute teachers who have completed state-mandated background checks, to replace teachers who do not report to work in-person. We will have nurses and security officers on site to keep your children safe. Additionally, there could be potential disciplinary action for employees who do not report to work in-person.**

We believe having students in school, with the above mentioned safety measures, is the best place for them. If we were to close schools, we would have to extend the school year. Additionally, we are required to take attendance each day. This year, we have made significant strides in providing critical instructional support for our students despite COVID-related challenges:

- We have continually sought input/feedback from staff and parents, making ongoing revisions to our Ready for Learning plan based on that feedback.
- We have increased the number of District in-person support visits to observe building cleanliness and instructional practices.
- We have established a plan to review extenuating circumstances for any personnel for consideration of work-site adjustments -
 1. As of today (September 27, 2020), 71 total requests made for accommodations in the workplace
 2. 11 have been successfully accommodated
 3. 48 changed their mind, elected medical leave or resigned
 4. 12 Pending requests for accommodations

LRSD is proud of the collaboration we have utilized to plan for in-person and virtual instruction, developing COVID safety steps, and working work through individual family, staff, and school issues. We want to continue our work together.

Again, we have no plans to close schools. We will provide regular updates and communication, notifying you the following ways:

- ParentLink notification message (calls, texts, emails)
- Website
- Social Media
- Broadcast and Print Media

Our priority during any job action is the safety and wellbeing of our students. We ask for your continued cooperation. Please call your building principal if you encounter any problems in the schools and be sure to stay informed by checking for information daily. Thank you for entrusting your child's education to LRSD.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Poore".

Mike Poore
Superintendent of Schools