



# Hancock County Public Schools

83 STATE ROUTE 3543  
HAWESVILLE, KENTUCKY 42348  
PHONE (270) 927-6914  
FAX (270) 927-6916

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**KYLE ESTES**  
Superintendent

11-5-20

Hancock County Families,

On Monday, November 9th, HCPS will continue with our Virtual Learning platform. HCPS will be 100% virtual instruction for the week of November 9-13 for the following reasons:

- We have a significant number (16) of key staff vacancies due to mandatory 14 day quarantines that make it unsafe and impractical to operate, even in a diminished in-person capacity.
- Hancock County is in the "Red" status at 39.3 which is still significantly higher than the recommended cut-off of 25 to cease in-person instruction.
- Our local health department has recommended we remain with virtual learning for at least another week to stabilize and decrease the spread within the community.
- The state infection rate is trending upward significantly. We currently are on a path to reach 2000 cases per day and sit at 6.5% positivity rate.

Based on our experience in following the state safety protocols for in-person learning, it is my belief that we can sustain in-person instruction without significant disease transmission. However, experience has shown that we cannot maintain in-person instruction when community spread is elevated like we have seen over the last few weeks. When community spread is elevated it results in Covid 19 being brought into our schools, which in turn results in quarantines. When high numbers of staff are quarantined and few substitutes are available, we cannot have in-person instruction. We need the entire community's help in preventing these types of situations. Please help us follow the safety protocols (wear a mask, wash your hands, social distance, and etc.) so we can consistently remain in school.

Covid 19 transmission data from our local health department over the past several days, does reflect slight improvement. It is my hope that this trend will continue, staff will be released from quarantine, and we can resume in-person instruction on November 16. However, this will only occur with your help and the help of our community to change our behavior to curb the spread of this virus.

On Thursday (November 12) afternoon, I will reassess the status of the factors listed above to make determinations on returning to in-person instruction.

Sincerely,

Kyle Estes,  
Superintendent