



# SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**Joseph Onofrio II**  
Superintendent of Schools

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December 9, 2020

Good afternoon Members of the Salem School District Community,

We are writing once again hoping that you and your family are healthy and well during this very difficult time period in our life experience. We feel very fortunate that due to everyone's diligence and following all recommended protocols, we were able to remain open for In-Person learning for 58 consecutive school days. As we are experiencing the second wave of this pandemic and a post-Thanksgiving surge, each of us **MUST** continue all of our mitigation strategies at all times if we are to remain healthy and safe.

The state's positivity percentage is the highest since the start of the pandemic. Salem's COVID data has been increasing as well. Currently, there are 160 towns in Connecticut with a Red Alert Status, which is 95% of our state. Each week I participate in many state-wide conference calls with our State Department of Public Health as well as our State Department of Education in addition to conferences with our District Health Director and area School Superintendents. Recently some of you have reached out to Mrs. Phillips or me regarding concerns during the next few weeks as we approach the holiday break and experience the post-holiday surge. The Administrative Team, our School Nurse, and I have been meeting, reviewing data, and consulting with our District Health Director.

Out of an abundance of caution, we believe it is in the best interest of our Salem School community to continue our Remote Learning for all students from Monday, December 14th through Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, with the expectation that we will return to In-Person Learning on Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup> as Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a school holiday. One hundred percent of our students have engaged in live teaching and learning, with their teachers and support staff, during these past remote learning school days. Thank you for making this possible; your partnership is invaluable and very much appreciated. You are familiar with your child's remote learning schedule, which will continue.

This decision was based on multiple new factors related to this week's holiday:

1. We can provide a continuity of education for our students with 100% staff attendance.
2. Travel, out of state would result in quarantine
3. Unknown potential exposures over the holiday
4. Extended time to review COVID-19 data in January

Our Food Service Department will continue to serve meals to students regularly.

We remind everyone to please limit your child's and your family's exposure to others by adhering to the following recommendations, outlined by the CDC:

Salem School District's Mission Statement

*"Salem inspires learning, creativity, critical thinking, personal integrity, and citizenship."*

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact – maintain 6 feet social distance
- Wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily
- Monitor your and your family’s health and seek medical attention should you feel ill or develop COVID symptoms
- For more information, please check the CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Please remember to contact Nurse Maggie at 860-859-0267 extension 3117 regarding positive COVID-19 cases during this period of Remote Learning. Your information will remain confidential. We are confident that everyone will continue to do their part to remain healthy and we can resume school on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Our Administration, our school nurse, and I will continue to update you as we review the most recent data for Salem, our surrounding communities, and the State.

Please know how appreciative we are to all of you for your support, understanding, assistance, and flexibility this school year. In addition, we want to express our deep gratitude to everyone on our staff who has been working tirelessly since last March to adjust to the many changes that have occurred in order to make school safe, special, and to provide the most rigorous instruction possible while also supporting our students emotional wellbeing. Please continue to reach out to us if you have any questions and if there is anything we can assist you with at this time. Please remember that there is an Early Dismissal School Day on Wednesday December 23<sup>rd</sup> which begins a School Vacation through January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Remote instruction resumes on Monday, January 4, 2021.

Happy Holidays! May 2021 bring us great health and happiness as together we turn the corner with this pandemic.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph Onofrio II  
Superintendent



Joan M. Phillips  
Principal

JO/jlk