



Administrative Service Center

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Robert S. Monroe
Interim Superintendent

February 24, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardians,

There has been good news this last month for a change regarding COVID-19. With positive testing numbers continuing to drop and vaccination rates continuing to rise, it appears that there is light at the end of an often dark tunnel. Our community mitigation strategies are making a difference. As more teachers, staff members, and community members become vaccinated, we continue to make progress in the fight against this disease.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we move forward with in-person instruction in our schools. Working together, we ensure health, safety, and educational stability for our students.

This weekend, we closed an in-person instruction survey that was completed by more than 6,200 staff and parents. As we analyze the results and prepare a summary to share with our community, there are a few themes that are already apparent. While there are strong and differing feelings regarding increased in-person learning, there is common ground and support in our community for continuing to move forward through a phased-in approach. With this in mind, here are the next steps in our return to full in-person instruction:

- Students in self-contained special education programs and our secondary English Learner courses are scheduled to return to four days per week of in-person instruction beginning the week of March 1. Parents in those programs have received information directly from the executive director of special services and our secondary principals regarding this return.
- The remainder of K-12 students will return to four full days – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – beginning the week of March 15. Wednesday will remain a remote learning day. Your school principals will shortly be sharing information with you directly on how this change will impact your child's school.
- It is our goal to return to full in-person instruction the week of April 19. This is one week after spring break and allows the district to address the impact of community travel during the annual break. As a proactive measure, UCS will be in full remote learning the week of April 12 to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community.
- Students who are enrolled in the Virtual Academy will remain in on-line instruction through the remainder of the school year.
- Our work will continue to focus on providing all families a full in-person environment this fall. The Virtual Academy, taught by UCS teachers, will remain available in the fall to families who want to keep an on-line option for their student.

Utica Community Schools Board of Education

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As we move forward, safety for students and staff remains a top priority. We continue to leverage our community partnerships to increase the opportunities for our staff members to receive their COVID-19 vaccines. UCS will continue to stress important safety protocols, such as face coverings, frequent handwashing and use of disinfectants. We will follow CDC guidelines to provide distancing to the greatest extent possible. We also ask that our families do their part by following the [self-screening protocols](#) each morning.

We have traveled this road together driven by resilience and a commitment to our kids. It is exciting to be taking these final steps toward the full reopening of our schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert S. Monroe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Robert S. Monroe
Interim Superintendent