

Herscher Community Unit School District No. 2

DR. RICHARD S. DECMAN, SUPERINTENDENT
SHELLY PARSONS, SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
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December 17, 2020

Dear Herscher District #2 School Community,

As we wrap-up the first semester and start preparing for the winter holidays in this unprecedented time, I want to encourage you to reflect upon all the unique events that have occurred in the last 9-10 months. It will be fascinating to see how each of us will look back at this time 5-10 years from now. Anyway, I have a few important items to share with you.

First, our District will **be extending the attendance day to a 2:05 p.m. dismissal for all our schools starting January 5, 2021** provided that we can adequately staff classrooms and we do not have an outbreak in any of our schools. Some of the reasons the Board of Education feels it is important to offer in-person learning for as long as possible are below:

- Offering in-person and remote learning gives parents a choice. The BOE feels that it is important for parents/guardians to be given a choice to decide whether their child should be educated in an in-person environment or a remote environment during these times.
- Across the country students are reportedly demonstrating serious mental issues as a result of a lack of socialization. According to the CDC there is a 31% increase in visits to the ER for mental health issues.
- It is very difficult for our at-risk students to overcome and receive assistance for their respective disabilities when they are not in school or are in school for a partial day.
- There are studies showing that for each day students are in Remote Education, they will lose a percentage of their life-time earnings from loss of learning.
- There are numerous studies showing the spread of COVID-19 is NOT happening as a result of schools being open.
- The BOE feels it is important to have a bell schedule that will not change for the remainder of the year. (Consistency and “normalcy” for students, teachers and students.)
- The BOE feels that schools provide an important role in the economy and that by not providing in-person learning we are forcing some working parents to make the difficult choice between working and staying home with their children.

Secondly, we are up-dating our COVID-19 statistics on a regular basis at the following link, [Community-Info-Page](#). Please feel free to visit this link for frequently up-dated COVID-19 statistics for our District.

Next, the District will continue to offer childcare services, but the time will change to 2:05 p.m. - 3:05 p.m. for PreK-8 students who are doing in-person learning. The District will offer these services at BGS, HIS and LMS. Students will be supervised by district faculty/staff. Parents/guardians interested in the Child Care Program for their student(s) **must complete the enrollment for 2nd Semester**. (Rosters will again be capped at 100 students/location and will not roll over from 1st semester.) For more information on this program, please visit our district's website www.hcusd2.org/Community Info Page or click here: [LINK to 2nd Semester Child Care Program](#)

Please enroll your student(s) by 12-28-2020 for planning and transportation purposes.

Finally, our District was recently notified by the Kankakee County Health Department that our employees will be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine starting in January. We plan to work with the Health Department to give this opportunity to our employees as quickly and easily as possible. Hopefully, the availability of a COVID-19 vaccine will be another step back to a return to “normalcy” for everyone.

Thank you again for your patience, understanding and support of our District. I hope everyone has a safe, relaxing and enjoyable holiday season!

Yours in Education,

Dr. Rich Decman
Superintendent

“Education... The Ultimate Investment.”