

Dear Manitou Springs School District Community,

Happy 2021!

I hope that the winter break was filled with everything that brought you joy, excitement, relaxation, and time for the activities and people you love. I was able to spend a significant amount of time reflecting on what worked well during the first semester and areas for growth based on the feedback from the surveys and day-to-day conversations and interactions with students, staff, and parents.

One of the key points of reflection revolved around the unique, caring, creative, and committed attributes of our school community. We'll keep working together to create opportunities for our students that are amazing, exciting, and grounding for their future aspirations and goals.

While I sure wish that I did not need to mention anything related to the pandemic, we are still in a pandemic. The positivity rates are trending in the right direction—downward. We will continue to monitor these rates and work towards the reduction of community spread.

Second Semester Start and Return to In-Person Learning

- **Staff Return:**
 - Remains the same--Wednesday, January 6
- **Student Return:**
 - Remains the same--Friday, January 8
 - Return to Remote Learning (All Grades)
 - Remote Learning from January 8-15
- **Monday, January 11:**
 - Students with an IEP attend in-person
 - Preschool students attend in-person
 - Students participating in FuelED begin coursework.
- **Monday, January 18: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:** No school.
- **Tuesday, January 19: Student Return to In-Person Learning**
 - **MSES & UPES: All Students Fully In-person (Important update from December communication)**
 - **MSMS & MSHS:** Hybrid In-PersonFor all schools, principals will be providing specific communications.

Strong Start

This includes:

- Remaining home if ill or exposed to someone who was positive with COVID or symptomatic and being evaluated for COVID. Completing the [COVID Intake Form](#) in these situations.
- Staff and students completing daily health screenings.
- Wearing a mask.
- Limiting group gatherings and interactions outside of school.
- Washing hands.

- Following general health and hygiene procedures.

In closing and with full transparency, unfortunately, my winter break was impacted as I was in close contact with an individual who later became ill with COVID. Upon learning this information, I quarantined and then needed to isolate as I also became symptomatic. While my symptoms would be considered mild with fatigue and a low-grade fever for a couple of days, it still impacted my life. I share this with you because my story connects to what has been said from the beginning. Individuals need to remain home if they are ill or have been around someone who tests positive for COVID. I was fortunate to have mild symptoms and to not have impacted others. This is not always the case. Let's continue to remain committed to taking the steps necessary to reduce community transmission and keep our students learning and staff working in-person. We are the school district and community that can do this beyond well.

I look forward to an incredible 2021 and beyond.

Very Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Domangue
Superintendent of Schools