



December 15, 2021

Dear WISD families and staff,

As we turn our eyes toward winter break and the new year, Washtenaw ISD would like to take a moment to express our appreciation and gratitude for all of you in our school community, the Washtenaw County Health Department, and our healthcare and scientific community. Our public health leaders and healthcare professionals are working around the clock to reduce the spread and severity of COVID-19 and keep us safe each day. This pandemic has been extremely challenging, but we are so encouraged by the many ways we have supported each other.

Going into winter break, cases and hospitalizations are rising nationally and in Michigan. With so much virus circulating, new cases are impacting many individuals and families in our community. Hospitalizations are overwhelmingly among unvaccinated individuals, and, increasingly, among those who were vaccinated more than six months ago. We strongly encourage everyone to take precautions during the holidays. Get vaccinated or boosted, stay home if you are sick, limit the size of holiday gatherings, wear a mask indoors and around others, social distance, and wash your hands. Unfortunately, COVID-19 cases often increase after holidays and when layered precautions are not used.

Vaccination continues to provide the best protection against getting COVID-19, spreading it, and experiencing severe symptoms or hospitalization. **Now that vaccines are widely available for children ages 5+ and boosters are approved for everyone aged 16+, we urge everyone to get vaccinated and boosted during winter break if you are eligible and have not yet done so.** [Learn more about local vaccination opportunities here](#) or talk with your primary care doctor, pharmacist, or the Health Department.

We are excited to share that Washtenaw leads the state in vaccinations for 5-11-year-olds (46% vaccination rate) and 12-15-year-olds (73%). We are optimistic that vaccination rates will continue increasing, which also means fewer interruptions to in-person learning. Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if exposed. Additionally, we will work with the Health Department to adjust isolation and quarantine guidance or other COVID-19 precautions as more children and their families are protected from the worst COVID-19 outcomes thanks to vaccination. While we hope local spread declines quickly, we are grateful that vaccinations now provide significant protection we did not have during previous surges.

Vaccination remains the best way to minimize disruptions to in-person learning, as well as protect those we love and others in our community, including people who are vulnerable such as children younger than 5 years old, the elderly, and those with underlying conditions or who are immune compromised.

We hope you have a restful, relaxing, and healthy winter break. As always, thank you for your continued support and partnership. We look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Naomi Norman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Naomi Norman
Interim Superintendent