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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HCS TO RESUME FIVE-DAY-A-WEEK INSTRUCTION FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING STUDENTS**

Elizabethtown, KY - Five-day-a-week in-person instruction will resume in Hardin County Schools on Monday, March 22, 2021, for elementary and middle school students. High school students will return to five-day-a-week in-person instruction on Monday, April 12. Students in both Group A and Group B will come together five days a week (Monday - Friday) for instruction.

“It has been our goal since March 2020 to bring our students back to receive five days of in-person instruction,” HCS Superintendent Teresa Morgan said. “The patience and devotion to success exhibited by our students, staff and families have been absolutely remarkable. We cannot adequately put into words how excited we are to be able to make this step.

“Ironically, it was one year ago that we made the decision to start non-traditional instruction. A lot has taken place and there is a bright light at the end of the tunnel. We feel confident in this decision to resume five-day-a-week in-person instruction.”

More than 1,700 of our staff members have received the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine over the past 6 days. The daily COVID-19 positivity rate is at four-percent (or below) and our daily incidence rate in Hardin County is below 20 per 100,000 people. These are the indicators we have been monitoring in anticipating a return to five-day-a-week in-person instruction.

In order to prepare for this step, staff will need additional time to prepare classrooms, cafeterias, and hallways. HCS transportation staff also needs time to maneuver routes, etc. Therefore, students in Group A and students in Group B will NOT attend in-person instruction Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

**This will be a non-traditional instruction day. There will be NO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION FOR ANY STUDENTS.** Students will receive work on Monday, March 15 and Tuesday, March 16 to complete on Wednesday, March 17. No Google Meets will take place that day. By setting the preparation day on Wednesday, both Group A and Group B will have two days of in-person instruction that week.

“Elementary and middle school students will go first because it is extremely critical those students get back and establish the routine,” Mrs. Morgan said. “March 22 is also the beginning of the fourth nine-week grading period for middle schools and a week after the fourth nine-week grading period starts for elementary schools. That is a perfect time for them to return.

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“Our high school students have already started their third trimester. The additional two weeks will allow us to ensure we have our logistics in order. We are adapting our instructional strategies as well as reestablishing our transportation routines and our food-service routines to accommodate larger groups of students. We are planning for much larger numbers of high school students to return. We’ll have to work with students’ schedules as well as ensure our logistical plans work and they are safe for everyone in the buildings.”

Here are some other important notes:

- The HCS Online Learning Academy will continue through the end of the 2020-21 school year.
- Parents may choose to transition their child from the HCS Online Learning Academy back to in-person learning now that we are going to school five days a week or parents may decide to go from in-person to OLA.
  - **Elementary and middle school students** - To make a change, contact your child’s BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR (principal, assistant principal or guidance counselor) AT YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL **BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY ON MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021.** This deadline provides us the time to prepare for changes.
  - **High school students** - To make a change, contact your child’s BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR (principal, assistant principal, or guidance counselor) AT YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL **BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY ON FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2021.** This deadline provides us the time to prepare for changes.
  - **A parent MUST talk to a building administrator for any transition to be finalized.**

Daily routine for parents and students:

- Temperatures will continue to be taken at school. We ask that parents pre-screen their children daily at home before they come to school for COVID-19 symptoms.
- All students and staff who ride the bus and enter the schools will be required to wear a face mask correctly and consistently to follow established guidelines.
- Our schools will continue to utilize a stringent cleaning regiment during and after school.
- Social distancing will continue to the greatest extent possible. Hardin County Schools will continue to follow the Kentucky Department of Public Health’s Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools. This document instructs us in the following manner: “If the physical space in the school does not allow for spacing students’ desks six feet apart, space desks as far away as possible.”
- Students will travel one-way only in the hallways (based on numbers).
- Social distancing will occur on buses when possible and masks will be required.
- Transportation staff will continue to utilize a stringent cleaning regiment.

“School will not look like it did in March of 2020 before the pandemic started,” Mrs. Morgan noted. “COVID-19 protocols and procedures will still be in place. The virus has not gone away. Staff vaccinations and the safety lessons we have learned over the past 12 months helped us make the decision to welcome all in-person learning students back to school five days a week.”

Mrs. Morgan has met with school administrators, staff and parents to discuss the return to five-day-a-week in-person instruction.

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