

***Sent on behalf of CSDE Commissioner Miguel A. Cardona and
DPH Commissioner Deidre Gifford***

Prolonged Remote Learning For Holidays/School Vacations

This communication is to reinforce the importance of school districts making public health data-driven decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic, while safeguarding the importance of student access to in-person schooling for our children's education, social-emotional and nutritional needs. Questions have been raised about having all students learn in a fully remote environment for an extended period after Thanksgiving, or other upcoming holidays.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and Department of Public Health (DPH) are closely monitoring the community spread of COVID-19, as well as the school-related cases of COVID-19. The mitigation strategies we have put in place (masks, distancing, cleaning and hygiene, ventilation, cohorting, etc.) are working. We are not seeing sustained person-to-person transmission of COVID-19 in schools or outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools, despite increasing levels of COVID-19 in the community.

We also know that in-person learning is benefiting our students' social, emotional and physical well-being. The CSDE and DPH do not think that arbitrary, date-based closures of school are warranted at this time. We will continue to consult with and work with school districts, local health departments and medical advisors on individual decisions around closures, but are not recommending that districts proactively close for a prolonged period of time in anticipation of changes in disease prevalence. In-person education is too important for our children to disrupt their education further, unless and until local conditions specifically dictate the need to do so.

Please ensure you are familiar with and consult [Addendum 4: Updated Guidance for Decision-Making Regarding the Use of In-Person, Hybrid \(Blended\), or Remote Learning Models in Connecticut Schools during COVID-19](#) to make these important decisions. Certainly, school districts may have to move to a remote model in the upcoming weeks and months due to the unique circumstances in the district, such as staffing. School districts should partner with their local health officials as they consider the appropriate course of action.