



November 19, 2020

Dear Dr. Lebo:

The Burlington Community School District is requesting an extension of our Permission to Provide Primarily Continuous/Remote Learning from November 23 through December 4. We are currently approved for the period from November 9 through November 20.

Over the past two weeks, positivity rates in Des Moines County have risen from 18.9% on November 5 to 21.4% today. The Positivity Rate has been consistently over 20% more than a week.

Since moving to Primarily Remote Instruction on November 9, we have seen a decrease in the number of staff and students reporting COVID illness, COVID exposure, and COVID symptoms. This is likely due in part to reduced exposure as resulting from Remote Instruction. It is also likely that many staff and students who are working and learning from home aren't reporting symptoms, exposure, or positive tests to the District.

Great River Medical Center, a Regional Hospital located in our community, has informed us that they are reaching capacity and predict that their number of inpatients with COVID will double over the next two weeks. Burlington Community School District is one of the largest employers in our County and serves over 3300 students. We are the largest organization in our City and one of the largest in our County. Remaining in Remote Learning for an additional two weeks will likely contribute to a decrease in COVID spread in our Community.

Respectfully,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "P. M. Coen".

Patrick M. Coen  
Superintendent

**Inspiring and challenging students through diverse opportunities.**

# Des Moines County Public Health

522 North Third Street • Burlington, Iowa 52601  
Phone 319-753-8290 or Fax 319-753-8703

---

## COVID-19 Des Moines County Burlington Community School District

### November-December 2020

**20-25% positivity in a county average over the past 14 days AND prior to going to on-line education these past two weeks the absenteeism rate was over 10% among students expected for in-person learning. Currently healthcare resources for the county are limited.**

On Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, IDPH and Des Moines County Public Health discussed the waiver request for the Burlington Community School District (BCSD). The school district has nine buildings in Des Moines County. The waiver is requested for the all the buildings in the district. At the time of the meeting, the 14-day positivity rate in Des Moines County was 21.4%.

When BCSD submitted for their original waiver on Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 15 students had reported testing positive for COVID-19, 139 students were quarantined, and an additional 47 students were out due to report of illness. At the time the previous waiver was submitted and approved, the student absenteeism rate was 17% for all schools combined. 16 staff had also reported testing positive for COVID-19, 19 staff were quarantined, and an additional 61 staff had called out sick due to symptoms.

Per the 2019 US Census, the population for Des Moines County was 38,967. In Des Moines County, the number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 14 days was 1.56K cases. The percentage rate for number of new cases for Des Moines County per 100,000 was 24.7% in the last 14 days. These numbers are being driving by continued sporadic illness within the county.

BCSD does have a mask mandate and has implemented all five CDC mitigation strategies correctly.

Des Moines County has a Testlowa clinic site sponsored by Great River Medical Center. The Testlowa site will test symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals. Great River offers testing as well for symptomatic individuals or close contacts. Both locations have reported a significant increase in the demand for COVID testing. There have been no mass testing events recently in Des Moines County.

Healthcare resources in Des Moines County are limited. Des Moines County has five Med/Surg and two ICU beds available, and regionally there are 198 Med/Surg and 43 ICU beds available.

In summary, the BCSD is trying proactively to continue on-line learning to decrease exposures so that they may return to in-person learning. The continued two-week pause from face-to-face learning will greatly help them do this. There continues to be heightened awareness throughout the community about COVID illness, as the effects of the illness is impacting the school district building as well as the entire community.

Christa Poggemiller  
Administrator  
Des Moines County Public Health