



IOWA

Department of Education

Ann Lebo, Director

Kim Reynolds, Governor
Adam Gregg, Lt. Governor

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

January 7, 2021

Matt Degner
Superintendent
Iowa City Community School District

Dear Superintendent Degner:

Thank you for your request for permission to provide primarily remote or continuous learning for the Iowa City Community School District, dated January 5, 2021, for a period beginning January 11, 2021.

Governor Reynolds's proclamation of disaster emergency, implementing the provisions of Senate File 2310 and most recently renewed today, allows the Iowa Department of Education ("Department") to approve instruction through primarily remote learning, "in consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health," based on "public health conditions in the building or district." The guidance on selecting the appropriate Return-to-Learn model released July 30, 2020, was established in consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health. We have reviewed the information you presented in your application in light of this guidance.

After consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health and considering the facts as a whole, the Department DENIES your request to provide primarily remote learning. As of January 6, 2021, the fourteen-day positivity rate for Johnson County is 12 percent, well below the guideline rate of fifteen percent. Concerning student absences, you report an absence rate of 4.5 percent, also below the guideline for student absenteeism.

We have considered the information you supplied from Johnson County public health authorities, expressing concern about rising infection rates as individuals move indoors and rising infection rates due to holiday gatherings. The guidelines set by the Department in consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health were designed as a measure of virus activity in all situations, and are not contingent on the weather or the calendar. It is reasonable to apply them here, and their application points toward denying your district's request.

For all these reasons, the Department concludes that it is inappropriate to grant your request to provide primarily remote learning beginning on January 11, 2021.

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Please let me know if I can answer any additional questions or if I can provide assistance as you proceed with your future plans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Lebo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. Ann Lebo
Director