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**DR. KANDACE BETHEA**  
*Superintendent*

December 16, 2020

Greetings Marion County School District Families:

As we continue to navigate through uncharted territory and approach the end of the 2020 calendar year, COVID-19 continues to have a profound impact on the nation, state and local community. With the health and safety of students and staff at the forefront of all decisions, it is imperative that we continuously evaluate and make adjustments based upon science, data and current circumstances.

Based on multiple data points, and out of an abundance of caution, after the winter break, the Marion County School District will operate on a Remote/Virtual Learning platform beginning Monday, January 4, 2021 through Friday, January 15, 2021. As a district, we must acknowledge the increases in COVID-19 incidence rates that have spiked since the Thanksgiving holiday as well as the likelihood that this same trend will continue after the Winter Holiday Break. It is always the district's goal to be proactive in our efforts to protect students and staff from the rapid escalation of cases reported in our area and help flatten the curve of infections.

Please note the following information:

- Students will receive live virtual instruction during the two weeks of the Remote/Virtual platform.
- The district will observe the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on Monday, January 18, 2021.
- Hybrid instruction will tentatively resume on Tuesday, January 19, with A days on January 19 and January 20, and B days on January 21 and January 22. There will not be a Friday Flex day for interventions during the week of January 18.
- Meal distribution information will be announced on the district's website and social media. Parents will also receive notifications through the Blackboard Notification System. Parents who are not receiving district calls or emails, are asked to update information through a form linked on the district's social media and website beginning December 16 - 20.

Over the next few weeks, we will continue to evaluate data and work with our Task Force and health care professionals to guide decisions regarding our operational phase for semester two which begins, January 27.

As we embark upon the holiday season, please remember to remain cautious in following current health and safety protocols in order to protect yourself, your family, and your community members as we work together to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Continue to follow safety guidelines established by the CDC, specifically social distancing, wearing your masks, and washing your hands regularly.

In closing, we appreciate how closely you have worked with our schools and staff as we experience these unprecedented times together. Thank you for flexibility and understanding. This is a difficult, but necessary decision as we continue to keep the safety of our students and staff as our first priority.

Best regards,

Kandace Bethea, PhD  
Superintendent

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