



# ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

1062 Pleasant Street • P.O. Box 968  
Athol, MA 01331  
Tel: 978-249-2400 • Fax: 978-249-2402  
Website: [www.arrsd.org](http://www.arrsd.org)

*The Athol-Royalston Regional School District is committed to providing challenging educational experiences that inspire students to acquire the knowledge and skills to become responsible citizens in the global community.*

January 14, 2021

**Darcy Fernandes**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Sheryl Femino**  
Administrative Assistant

**John Salovardos**  
Director of Pupil Services

**Molly Superchi**  
Pre-K -8 Curriculum  
Director

**David King**  
Principal  
Athol High School

**Thomas Telicki**  
Principal  
Athol-Royalston  
Middle School

**Shannon Cleveland**  
Principal  
Athol Community  
Elementary School

**Cynthia Kennedy**  
Principal  
Royalston Community School  
Title I Director

**Stephen Femino**  
Facilities and Transportation

**Lynn Bassett**  
Business Manager

**Edward Skutnik**  
Director of Technology

Dear Staff, Parents, and Caregivers,

This morning I met with the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), our lead nurse, the ATA president, and our COVID Lead. During the meeting, we reviewed the data on COVID for both communities. Here is what we found:

- Athol has 115 active cases in the community. Twenty-five of them are in one nursing home.
- Royalston has 14 active cases in the community.
- Our District currently has four teachers quarantined and ten students. Only 5 of these cases are active. The rest have been quarantined due to close contact. None of these cases were due to school spread.

The DESE representative shared with our team state data that showed that mitigation factors such as wearing masks, washing hands, and keeping distance keep schools from having spread. The state continues to see high numbers of children across the state in mental health crises, more so than with COVID. They have cautioned that keeping schools closed for an extended period could result in other community issues.

After hearing everyone's thoughts, we have decided to continue with our current status one more week to ensure the holiday surge has slowed down even further. We are now scheduled to reopen for in-person learning on January 25, 2021.

We continue to look for more ways to mitigate the spread of COVID. Team members shared information from the Pool testing webinar. **Pooling** testing involves mixing several samples in a "batch" or pooled sample, then **testing** the pooled sample with a diagnostic **test**. This approach increases the number of individuals that can be **tested** using the same amount of resources. Our District is entertaining doing pool testing. We will be posting for a pool testing coordinator. If a person is found for the position, we will start a pilot at one of our schools soon. Parents and staff will receive a notice with further details if pool testing takes place in our District.

Any parent of a child on an IEP who did not choose to have their student in and has changed their mind may call their school in the morning to inform them that you want your child to come in next week. If you do not notify the school by 10:00 AM, the District will not be able to take your child in because we have to let our teachers and the bus company know.

Thank you for your patience as we all navigate through this tough time.