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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

It is amazing how quickly the school year slips by, even during a year as unique as this one. Here we are in December, experiencing the bumps in the road that we anticipated once we opened our doors for hybrid instruction.

I am appreciative of the feedback that you have provided throughout this process, as it has been instrumental in our ability to map out an educational path for our students' instruction both in-person and remote.

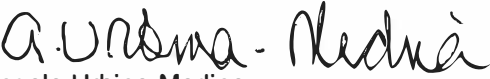
You have received notification letters from me each time that we have had a situation on our campus involving the COVID-19 virus. We have been fortunate overall, as the positive cases themselves have not been significant.

However, the impact of even one case among our students or staff members can have an unfortunate domino effect, necessitating quarantines and rendering one or more of our buildings unable to open for in-person instruction. Such was the case Wednesday evening when the decision was made to pause in-person instruction under our hybrid model at Duzine Elementary School and New Paltz Middle School and shift to remote-only learning from Thursday, December 3 through Friday, December 11.

Although the various COVID-19 situations that we have experienced so far in the school district have been very different from one another, they usually involve the need for one or more people to quarantine as a result of the contact that they had with a positive case or someone who we suspect is positive based on the symptoms that they present. Yesterday evening it was apparent from the number of staff members that we had in quarantine, combined with other absences, that we would not be in a position to open two of our four buildings with appropriate coverage. Under these circumstances, the nationwide substitute teacher shortage—which has posed a challenge in ordinary years—has amounted to an enormous challenge.

Please understand that we will do all that we can to avoid situations that require shifting to all-remote, especially with little notice, but our commitment to health and safety will always be our first and foremost priority. There will likely be the need for other abrupt shifts to remote instruction in the future. Please be assured that we do not make these decisions lightly and we will do all that we can to make sure that we communicate any changes as soon as possible so that you are able to make appropriate arrangements. We appreciate your support, patience, and flexibility as we continue to navigate this fluid situation.

Sincerely,


Angela Urbina-Medina
Superintendent of Schools