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McCracken County families, staff and students,

It's hard to believe Christmas is only one week away.

This year has been an unprecedented one for us all. The way we live, work, teach and learn looks so different. No matter your personal opinions about the pandemic, its effects on daily life around the world are undeniable, including here in western Kentucky. It's the type of moment that brings out the best and worst in people. But in the Christmas spirit, I'd rather remember the good. There really *is* so much good to remember, even in 2020.

It reminds me of Newton's third law of motion, which we all learn in school at some point: *For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.* It's been on full display this year.

In reaction to loss, we responded with gratitude. Not knowing how or when we'd see our students and loved ones made every moment with them precious. In response to uncertainty, we responded with resilience. When so much was out of our control, we didn't dwell on it, but instead used every resource we had to do what we could. And in reaction to frustration, anger and exasperation, we responded with compassion. This year has been hard on us all, every last one of us. We all deserve compassion when our patience wears thin, so that we can pay that compassion forward when the time comes. Because, let's face it, that time always comes.

As we head into Christmas break, it's important to stay vigilant and stay safe. We all know the guidance at this point. Stay home when you can. Wash your hands thoroughly, and often. Reschedule or postpone indoor social gatherings. And when you do venture out or interact with anyone outside your household, keep your distance and wear a mask. The virus doesn't go away just because the Christmas decorations come out.

It's not certain yet exactly how or when we'll return to in-person instruction in the new year, but our hope is to start back with a hybrid, A/B schedule as soon as we can safely do so. We will continue working closely with the Purchase District Health Department to navigate state guidance and make smart decisions for our staff, students and community. We'll update you on any decisions or changes in plans as soon as they're made.

In the meantime, let's remember Newton's law and respond to this moment with gratitude, resilience, and compassion.

Have a very merry Christmas, and hopefully a much happier, brighter new year,

Steven T. Carter

Steven T. Carter, Superintendent
McCracken County Public Schools



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Serving our community through excellence in education.