

11/13/2020

Highland CUSD No. 5 Parents and staff,

It's Friday the 13th and exactly eight months since the announcement that the State of Illinois was going to shut down beginning March 17. We have learned much since that time and yet so much remains unknown. Much of the country is seeing increased numbers of cases and Governor Pritzker has commented over the last couple of days that more mitigation may be necessary, including the possibility of reverting back to Phase 2 and/or Phase 3 mitigations. This could also include the closing of schools once again if some immediate improvement is not evident.

Locally, our biggest challenge has been our ability to secure enough substitutes to cover classes for teachers who have been impacted by COVID or quarantined. Our community continues to respond to our calls for assistance. Since the update last week, we have seven new substitutes lined up going through the necessary steps to obtain a substitute license. The response has been great and it continues to allow us to remain in person. I am hopeful that we can weather the current spike and get through the holidays. We continue to see our staff and students recover and return to school on a daily basis. Many of our quarantined students and staff are set to return to school on Monday.

The report for this week is a mixed bag. The overall numbers are lower than last week, but continue to be high. Still, a large majority of our cases appear to be coming from exposures outside of the school environment. Please be conscience of the current spread as you plan holiday activities and keep kids home when an exposure has occurred and/or symptoms start to develop.

Here are the numbers: Highland Primary had 1 student presumed positive due to an outside exposure forcing 5 students to quarantine. They had 1 staff confirmed positive and 1 staff presumed positive. 2 additional teachers were quarantined due to exposure outside of the school environment. Highland Elementary had 3 confirmed student positives and 1 staff positive resulting in 15 quarantined students. Alhambra Primary had 2 staff and 15 students in one classroom quarantined due to a confirmed positive student. They also had 1 additional student positive resulting in 5 quarantined students. Grantfork Elementary had zero confirmed positive cases this week. Highland Middle School had 1 confirmed positive student resulting in zero quarantines. Highland High School had 8 confirmed positive cases and 2 presumed positive cases while 119 students remain on quarantine.

These numbers are not impressive and we hope that we see improvement over the next week or so. There is growing concern from our staff about coming to work on a daily basis and we are working to ensure every opportunity to increase safety is explored. Please be careful and stay healthy as we near the holiday season. If there are any additional mitigation strategies implemented at the state level, I will be sending updates to reflect those changes and how they impact school districts. I will be in touch and have a wonderful weekend!

Sincerely,

Michael S. Sutton, Superintendent