

November 24, 2020

Highland CUSD No. 5 Parents and Staff,

As we head into the Thanksgiving holiday break, it's appropriate to provide a message to families expressing thanks and gratitude. It has been a long and challenging school year. In normal years, updates such as the ones I send each week would focus on the positive things going on in and around the district. However, COVID-19 has shaken everyone's world and the positives that are occurring in our district can easily be overshadowed by the unprecedented challenges we face.

The challenging year has brought to light some very obvious things to be thankful for: teachers and staff who adapted incredibly to difficult circumstances, our parents who altered work schedules, our custodial staff for keeping buildings clean and sanitized, cafeteria workers for preparing meals and principals for their leadership. Mostly, I have gratitude for our students who have demonstrated tremendous patience and understanding as they navigate new learning models through this pandemic.

At the end of the day, each of us are trying to do the best we can under incredibly difficult circumstances. It hasn't always gone smoothly, but I believe we have learned a lot since the first day of school that will make us more prepared and stronger for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year and beyond.

This was a very short week, but I would like to provide updated numbers since last Friday. Highland Primary reported one teacher who tested positive since Thursday and zero new student cases. Highland Elementary reported one teacher in quarantine due to outside exposure and zero new student positives. Alhambra Primary and Grantfork Elementary reported zero new positive cases. Highland Middle School reported one new student positive this week along with 22 new quarantines. Highland High School reported 2 student positives and 2 staff positives since Friday's update. They also reported that 48 students remain on quarantine at the current time.

Another piece of information that needs to be passed along is the updated school calendar that was approved by the Board of Education last night. We have amended the calendar to reflect a ½ day early dismissal on Friday, December 4 and Friday, March 5. The calendar already included ½ day dismissals on Friday, February 5 and Friday, May 7. These will remain on the calendar. The ½ day early dismissals will look differently than in the past. Highland Primary and Highland Elementary will dismiss at 11:00 a.m., Alhambra Primary and Grantfork Elementary will dismiss at 11:05 a.m., Highland Middle School and Highland High School will dismiss at 12:35 p.m.

Please be safe this Thanksgiving holiday weekend. School will resume on Monday, November 30 under the same schedule we have used so far this year. While this school year has not been what anyone would wish for, I hope each of you can still find gratitude and something you are thankful for this holiday season. Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

Michael S. Sutton, Superintendent