December 11, 2020

Highland CUSD No. 5 Parents and Staff,

The update sent earlier was created earlier in the day and scheduled to go out at 2 p.m., which is consistent from week to week. I also had to send an additional update shortly afterwards when it was brought to my attention that we missed reporting a case. There are many moving parts to what we do and occasionally we will miss something. Frankly, by the end of any given week, it seems two weeks have passed because of the amount of work going on.

I indicated in the original update for this week that I had a scheduled meeting this afternoon. I did meet with the MCHD as well as all superintendent's in Madison County as we do each Friday at 1 p.m. The results that I have to report are not positive. It appears that the shortened quarantines cannot be used by Highland CUSD No. 5. The language highlighted below is part of the shortened quarantine guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health and pertains to any individual that utilizes the shortened quarantine period of 7 days and 10 days:

With both options the following additional criteria through Day 14 must be met:

• correct and consistent mask use (including within homes),

• social distancing,

• hand and cough hygiene,

• environmental cleaning and disinfection,

• avoiding crowds,

• ensuring adequate indoor ventilation,

• monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 illness, and

• minimizing contact with persons at increased risk for severe illness, including vulnerable and congregate pop

I didn't even get into what exactly it means to wear masks even in homes, but the required social distancing is very specific that 6 ft. of social distancing is required throughout the school day. This is not possible to ensure for any student throughout the school day. So, I am sorry to report that the shortened quarantines can be eliminated for consideration by Highland CUSD No. 5. I may have additional information to report during next week's update.

Thanks and have a wonderful weekend!

Sincerely,

Michael S. Sutton, Superintendent