



Update #17 – December 17, 2020

Santa Fe R-X Community:

A time has nearly come that many thought we would not see in 2020; the end of the first semester without any school closures!!! I am incredibly grateful for this fact and am confident that our students have been the benefactors educationally, emotionally and socially and I hope that our community and families have benefited from this as well by maintaining as much normalcy as possible.

As for COVID updates, I am happy to say that we presently have only two students quarantined, both as a result of contact outside of school, with zero positive cases. For the month of December, Santa Fe High School has averaged 95.15% attendance and the elementary has averaged 93.10%. These attendance stat's are encouraging as we poise for the second half of our school year. On behalf of the Santa Fe staff, we would like to thank our parents and patrons for your support in educating the youth of Santa Fe.

Academically, the state board of education recently approved the State Department of Education's (DESE) plan for state assessments in the spring. There was much discussion about this in the education world as the validity of this data to be used as comparable to prior/future years was compromised by school closures. The plan approved by the state board is that the assessments will be given to provide analytic data, but that the results will not be used in accountability measures for school districts. One must say that it will be interesting to see the impact that school closures, distance learning and hybrid/part time schedules have had on the academic gains of K-12 students. At Santa Fe, we use a 'bench marking' program called Evaluate to measure our K-8 students' academic progress throughout the year in Math and English/Language Arts, enabling our staff to monitor and respond to either mastery of selected standards or opportunities for growth. Overall, I am very satisfied with the academic progress being made this year.

On other fronts, I am very happy that we have been able to continue to offer our extra-curricular programming for our students. Though we were not able to have an in person SFE Christmas concert, we were able to offer a fine arts production with the 7-8 band and 9-12 band and choir perform under the direction of Mr. Gaddy. Though it has required extensive flexibility, we were able to make it through the Fall athletic schedule, and I am optimistic we will make it through the Winter/Spring seasons as well. We will do everything we can do to continue to provide these academic and extra-curricular opportunities for our kids.

More importantly than any of this, we here at the Santa Fe School District wish all of our students and patrons a wonderful holiday season! Though it may be difficult at times in our present (media) climate, let us all find the many blessings we have that we take for granted; it's true, the best and most important things in life are free and typically right in front of us. For me, I could start with giving thanks for working in and being part of a great community. It has been a great experience for my family.

Appreciatively,

**Derek Lark
Superintendent
Santa Fe R-X School District**