

February 5, 2021

Highland CUSD No. 5 Parents and Staff,

I hope everyone has had the good fortune to have a wonderful week like I feel we have had at Highland CUSD No. 5. It has been fantastic to see so many great things going on such as teachers being nationally recognized, students being given honors for academic achievement, HHS students being recipients for scholarships, and staff efforts being recognized through gifts from different groups in the community. There is so much of this going on that I hesitated to specifically mention any of them due to the length of my update.

I do want to specifically call out one of the most wonderful things that warms my heart this week. I have been communicating to you my concerns moving forward with the plan of vaccinations for county school district staff and how that might impact our ability to continue in-person learning moving forward. I am so happy that through our updates, communication, or perhaps the fact that we have been live streaming our board meetings, some individuals took notice and put me in touch with exactly the correct contacts to partner with St. Joseph's Hospital to vaccinate all of our staff who desire to receive the vaccination.

As this update goes out today at 2 p.m. we will be in the middle of a vaccination clinic that will provide every full-time staff member, most of our bus drivers, all of the food service, and several of our most utilized substitutes (who desire to receive the vaccine) the first dose of the COVID vaccine. The fantastic timing of this partnership allowed this to be done today during an already scheduled ½ day teacher in-service. Even more amazing is the fact that the 2nd dose would be 28 days later, which coincides with the March 5th ½ day teacher institute.

I have talked with superintendents around the state and they cannot find any opportunities like this. Generally, Fridays and Weekends are not welcome because the staff needed to make this happen for a number of reasons and cannot work late into a Friday night or extra hours on the weekend. This clinic will necessitate two Friday clinics from noon to 8:00 p.m. Not to belabor this point, but WOW, how lucky are we? I can't thank the individuals who took the initiative to make this happen and St. Joseph's Hospital enough for this wonderful opportunity for our entire community. Yes, the entire community because we serve nearly 3000 families who will not have any disruption of school days. Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!!!

Another exciting piece of information is our planning for Highland High School Graduation for the class of 2021. It is extremely important that we provide the opportunity for our seniors to celebrate their accomplishments with their families with an in-person graduation ceremony. Now this will be difficult because we do not know what the mitigations will allow in three months. This is why we have blocked off the entire weekend of May 14, 15, and 16 to ensure some type of in-person ceremony will take place. For example, if the weather looks great for Friday night, we may have a ceremony on the football field. If the weather does not cooperate, we may have a ceremony on the football field Saturday afternoon or perhaps Sunday afternoon. We are hopeful that mother nature is good to us. The absolute worst-case scenario is weather makes it impossible to do any type of outside ceremony and we have to move the activities into the gym where mitigations could necessitate a live stream and

spectators could not attend. Given our past fortunes, I think we can make this happen! Over the next couple of months, I will be including updates on this situation.

Regarding our numbers for this week, Highland Primary reported 1 positive student resulting in five student quarantines, 2 students being tested, 6 students in quarantine due to outside exposures and 1 student in isolation. Alhambra Primary reported 1 student positive resulting in 1 quarantine. Highland Elementary reported 6 students in quarantine due to outside exposure and 3 students awaiting test results. Grantfork Elementary reported zero positives or quarantines at this time. Highland Middle School reported 1 student awaiting test results and 1 teacher out due to a quarantined child. Highland High School reported, wait for it, **zero** new positives and 5 students remain on quarantine.

As you can see from the reported numbers, we had one of our best weeks in some time regarding COVID. Another very positive trend in a week of positives😊 I am sure that we will continue to have some challenges moving forward, but for now, please enjoy the great things that are happening all around us. Who knows, maybe the next great news will be a message one evening next week or early in the morning about a ---- day. Let it snow, let it snow! Have a great weekend and Go Chiefs!

Sincerely,

Michael S. Sutton, Superintendent