



HAVANA CUSD #126

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August 11th, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are super excited to start the 2021-2022 school year. Unfortunately, the governor has mandated masks for all k-12 schools to start the school year. This is not a local decision at this time, but the school board will re-evaluate the mask requirements if given back that local control. I shared the link to our updated “Return to School Plan” yesterday on social media and the district website. All should read the plan to familiarize themselves with procedures. Below is a brief summary of the most significant changes.

- We will have a full school day dismissing at 3:00 instead of 2:00.
- Social Distancing requirements have been reduced from 6ft. to 3ft.
- Vaccinated students and those who have had the virus within 90 days won't need to be close contact quarantined.
- There is no 50-person occupancy limit in school spaces this year... buses, cafeteria, etc.
- Masks will be required in all K12 schools per Governor executive order. Masks guidelines will be re-evaluated if the mandate is lifted.
- “Test-to-Stay” was implemented this year. Students and Employees who have been a close contact to a positive COVID case (excluding a household contact) can agree to take a rapid BinaxNow or Shield saliva test every other day for a week to show they are healthy and they can remain in school and participate in extracurricular events.
- No masks are required for any outdoor events or extracurricular contests.
- The district has completed all the IDPH required paperwork and waivers to be able to provide BinaxNow Rapid tests and the final details are being worked out to have a third party come and offer Shield Saliva Testing. Both are free of charge. Parents will have to Opt-in to participate.

There are many positive benefits to the district becoming a testing site. All testing is reported to the IDPH and the additional tests will help reduce Mason County's positivity rates and status. Testing will be a convenience so our symptomatic students and staff won't have to go out of town to get a test. The ability to test was essential to take advantage of the “Test-to-Stay” program. Last year we quarantined over 700 students who missed over 7000 days of school as a result. Less than half of one percent of those 700 quarantined students (3) contracted the virus, meaning 99.6% of those quarantined kids were healthy and forced to miss school. There should be fewer close contacts with distancing being reduced to 3 ft. and with the rapid test option those that are close contacts can stay in school with a negative rapid test every other day.

Last year we were very successful at providing a safe in person education all year, when many other schools were forced to shut down. We will continue to do everything we can to safely educate our students.

Superintendent Plater