

September 17, 2021

Highland CUSD No. 5 Parents and Staff,

Over the next couple of months, the weekly message may become less dependable on Friday afternoons. I will provide an update if there is significant information to share. The weekly letter has been a great tool to provide our stakeholders pertinent information regarding the COVID situation and in some cases other information in a timely manner.

Please know that our attention remains on current mandates and executive orders including 2021-20, which requires vaccines for all school staff or weekly testing for school staff who are not vaccinated. Every person has an opinion on the mandates and the district will be talking with staff about the implications of this order once the rules/guidance has been provided. The district has not officially taken a stance on this order, but remains opposed to all state mandates and executive orders rather than local control of schools.

I want to review how our weekly numbers are generated. Each week I ask each building to report new cases for the week. The numbers are factual and represent only what we are aware of. They are new cases and not ongoing cases. Fact checkers who contact the MCHD may get something different, but I can only report cases of which we are aware. If the MCHD reports active cases, it will be different than what we report. I can assure you that our numbers are what we see weekly.

We continue to follow the IDPH guidance as best as we can to protect the safety of students and staff. I remind you that we are educators and we try to focus on education of students. The challenges since March 2020 have taken a toll on all of us. Please be kind to one another and respect that there are differences in our opinions and thoughts.

We continue to remind staff and students to stay home when sick, wash hands well and often, and cover coughs and sneezes. This will help us keep staff and students in class where they need to be. We will continue to battle the daily challenges and work together to provide a great school year for our students.

Weekly COVID numbers: Highland Primary reported 9 student quarantines and 7 student positive cases from outside exposures for the week. Alhambra Primary reported 1 student quarantine from an outside exposure. Highland Elementary reported 1 new student positive and 7 new student quarantines. Grantfork Elementary reported 1 student positive and zero new quarantines. Highland Middle School reported 11 new student positives, 5 student quarantines, 1 staff quarantine with 3 students awaiting test results. Highland High School reported 10 new student positives and 6 students quarantined as a result.

Our teachers are working diligently to provide homework and necessary items to keep students who are in isolation and quarantine up to speed in their absence. Please be patient as they work to do this on a daily basis.

Thank you for your continued support of Highland CUSD No. 5. Have a great weekend!

Sincerely,

Michael S. Sutton, Superintendent