

December 17, 2021

Highland CUSD No. 5 Parents and Staff,

First, I apologize for the brevity of the alert I sent yesterday. I was trying to get ahead of messaging and some concerns voiced locally. The purpose was not to alarm you. Highland School District was made aware of the circulating TikTok post with a nationwide threat that would supposedly take place today. The original post was general and not directed at a specific school. The Highland and Grantfork Police Departments have been in communication and have provided extra presence at all of our schools this morning, including Alhambra Primary School. We will continue to be vigilant throughout the day to ensure our students and staff remain safe at school.

We do ask you to be aware of the following points regarding this threat and any threats in the future that cause concerned feelings:

- Be sure to report any concerning message you hear or see in person or online to a trusted adult, school administration or staff member, or police.
- Please do not promote social media rumors, instead, tell us.
- If you feel uncomfortable about something you read, something you hear, something you see please, report it so we can do something about it.
- Know who is connecting with your children online and set rules for social networking, instant messaging, e-mailing, online gaming and using webcams.
- The Highland School District is committed to keeping our schools a safe place for learning, and we will work together to continue to keep it that way.

We have a regular school board meeting on Monday, December 20 at 7 p.m. We have lots of business to complete and I am hopeful that next week's update will include several items that will provide some clarity on the district's strategic priorities as we move into the new year. The live stream of the board meeting can be accessed through the following link: <https://youtu.be/Sn8FBUE0aPc>

Our COVID numbers for the week are as follows: Highland Primary reported 1 positive staff member and 3 positive students, all related to out of school exposures. In addition, they have 3 staff members in quarantine, 2 from in school exposures. They have 4 students in quarantine, 1 from an in school exposure. Alhambra Primary reported 3 quarantined students resulting from outside exposure. Highland Elementary reported 2 positive student cases. Grantfork Elementary reported 3 quarantined students resulting from outside exposure. Highland Middle School reported 1 quarantine staff and 2 quarantined students and zero new positive cases. Highland High School reported 2 positive staff members and 3 positive student cases.

There is no doubt that the number of cases are rising right now and we are hopeful that none of the cases result in serious illness for any of our students, staff, and/or families. We continue to do what we can to provide a safe environment for our students and staff given the circumstances that we are presented with. We know that many of our families and staff are tired of masks and the mitigations. The district is currently included in litigation regarding masks and vaccine mandates and hope the courts will soon provide some clarity on the scope of local decision making regarding these mitigations. Please be patient with us until such clarity is provided. Our Board of Education is elected and hope that this

provides an opportunity for them to make decisions that reflect the interest and values of our community at large.

I would like to take another opportunity to appeal to anyone interested in being a substitute in our schools. It has been increasingly difficult to find enough subs on a daily basis. It is becoming normal to have a number of positions unfilled on a daily basis. If you know of individuals who might be interested, please have them reach out to the main office. Dena can walk them through the process of getting certified and quickly start offering opportunities to sub. I appreciate any assistance you can provide in helping us in this way.

I had the pleasure over the last couple of weeks to attend several Christmas programs as well as band and choir concerts. It was fantastic to see the kids perform in front of their families and things getting closer to normal for everyone. I plan to provide the last weekly update in 2021 next week even though it is a short week. Can you believe 2022 is just around the corner? Have a great weekend and see you next week!

Sincerely,

Michael S. Sutton, Superintendent