



Update #12 – September 2, 2020

Santa Fe R-X Community:

I was at the volleyball game on Tuesday and was approached by a patron from the opposing team (someone I know) who kindly informed me that he was sorry to hear about things at school; I replied, “what would that be?” “Well”, he said, “I heard pretty much the entire football team has Covid and you’re going to have to close the high school”. To which I replied, “Well, that’s good to know; I’ll tell the guy in charge!” The truth is that we should all probably give pause to about anything we hear nowadays, especially when it comes to schools, politics and Covid-19.

While we have had our first positive cases and students quarantined as a result, we are not closing the high school and only one player on the high school football team is positive for “the” virus. As you may recall from last week’s update, all of this was assumed to happen as there is simply no way to stop it, short of never leaving home. The facts are that at the time of writing this (5:06 p.m. on 9/2), we have 3 positive cases at the high school, 0 positive at the elementary, and 12 in quarantine because of ‘close contact’, 11 at the high school and 1 at the elementary. 6 of these quarantines are a result of contact with people outside of the walls of Santa Fe facilities.

I am happy to report that our new air purifiers have been installed in both buildings. To quote from Update #10, “Bi-Polar ionization air purification machines have been scheduled for installation. These machines remove any pathogens (viruses/mold/mildew/bacteria/allergens (pollen/smoke)) from the air. These systems will be in addition to our new air handlers, all of which should greatly help improve the air quality within our facilities (from what it has been in the past).” As well, buildings continue to be wholly disinfected daily and regular sanitation protocol for students is in place, along with other measures. Nothing, however, is full-proof.

On another note, you may know that as a result of quarantines, we had to make the decision to cancel our football game this Friday. This is very unfortunate and I do wish this decision could have been avoided.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not mention that I have had some very, very good people, staunch supporters of the Santa Fe School District, question some of the decisions I have had to make. I very much respect them as people as well as their opinions and spent time in consideration of what they had to say. These conversations have centered around whether masks should be mandated or not. I would not argue that the wearing of masks reduces the spread of this, or any other air-borne, communicable disease. However, a line has to be drawn somewhere on what is mandated and what is not, and at this point masks will not be mandated. They are provided and certainly strongly recommended in certain scenarios, however. We do have our staff and students who are in contact with patrons (concessions and gate duty) during activities wear masks.



In closing, it continues to be my hope and intention that we are able to keep our doors open to our students for learning and offer all of our extra-curricular programming throughout the 2020-21 school year.

Sincerely,

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