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Michelle Dutrow, Superintendent

Good Afternoon:

It is hard to believe that another school year is just around the corner. In just two short weeks, the children of our community will be back for the 2021-2022 school year. The faculty and staff are hard at work getting everything ready and are eager to see our kiddos return.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to surge across our country and we are faced with the need to implement health and safety measures once again. It will be necessary for us to balance the health and safety of our students and employees with providing the educational program our children deserve. This year, we are looking to use "layered mitigation" measures to govern our operation during the continued pandemic. In short, this means we will operate the school using low level, moderate level and high level health and safety measures based on our local and schools COVID-19 positivity rates. The lower the local and school case counts, the more closer to normal our operation. Likewise, the higher the local and school case counts, the more stringent the health and safety measures.

In regards to remote instruction, for parents opting to have their children receive instruction at home, the district will purchase all courses from an outside vendor. Full time at-home students will not be remoting into our classrooms with very few exceptions. In-house students (Grades 7-12) at home on quarantine due to a positive COVID case or those unvaccinated in-house students at home due to close contact will be remoting in for the short duration of their absence. Younger students at home due to a positive case or quarantine will receive work to complete at home.

We are viewing masking through the same layered mitigation lens as other parts of our operation. Our first priority will be to keep our students unmasked as long as possible, followed by employees and then visitors. If our local/building data remains where it currently sits, all students will be unmasked when the school year starts with the exception of on buses/vans. School buses/vans have been deemed public transportation and are therefore subject to the federal masking mandate that is still in place. All visitors into the building will be masked as of the first student day. We are considering our options (masked versus unmasked) as it applies to employees and will make a final determination prior to the first student day.

School closures were used last year whenever a building hit a threshold of positive cases among students and employees. For this school year, closing is to be viewed as a last resort and will be implemented only when higher level layered mitigation efforts prove unsuccessful in decreasing our case numbers.

As was our standard procedure last school year, parents are to bring positive COVID cases to the attention of district administration and the school nurse. Any student or employee testing positive for COVID will need to be isolated as per DoH guidance. Any unvaccinated student or employee who is identified as a close contact will be reported and a quarantine requested in accordance with DoH guidelines.

I will be sending periodic communications as was our procedure last school year via email, Facebook and the district website. It is our hope that the plans we will implement around layered mitigation will prove successful and we might see a gradual return to more normal operations. Regardless, please know that the employees of the school district are committed to providing your child/children with a quality educational program and I am personally committed to implementing a plan that has as its priority the health and safety of all of our students and employees.

Sincerely,
Micki Dutrow