

Gibraltar School District

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Dear GSD Families,

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I would like to update you on the new COVID-19 dashboard that has been added to the main page of our website. This dashboard presents the current cases of COVID-19 in the district as well as the number of staff and students who are currently in quarantine. As you review this dashboard, it is important to take note of a few very important points.

1. The District is required to report any student or staff member who tests positive for COVID-19 regardless of where they may have contracted COVID-19. For example, a student who tests positive after being exposed at their place of employment will be counted in the district positive COVID-19 cases. Likewise, if a student or staff member is quarantined due to close contact with a positive individual, this individual will still be reported in our number of quarantined individuals regardless of where the contact occurred.
2. So far, the majority of our positive cases have been traced to gatherings, events, parties, travel sports teams - all occurrences outside of school. It is also important to note that sometimes the origin of a positive case is unknown and that may involve additional contact tracing, quarantining additional staff and/or students, or closing a building for 14 days as a precaution due to the unknown origin.
3. If there was an "outbreak" (determined to be transmission during school hours to multiple individuals) in one of our schools, the Wayne County Health Department would identify the outbreak and help us to determine the next steps, which could mean closure of a building for 14 days, quarantining a classroom, sports team, or participants in an extra-curricular activity, to name a few.
4. When a student and staff member is in quarantine that means that individual was identified as a close contact to someone that has tested positive for COVID-19 within the previous 48 hours of symptom onset or positive test result for asymptomatic. Examples include, but are not limited to, having a positive relative in their household, attending a party or event that was not a school related event, or exposure through other gatherings where social distancing is not observed.
5. It is important to note that by law the district is NOT allowed to share any identifying information about a positive case and notification of a positive case is only sent to that school building (per WCHD). If you have questions about your child's school building, please contact your child's principal. As a reminder the district is not allowed to share information about anyone that is positive or is quarantining.
6. One common question is how many cases does it take to close a building or district for 14 days? The answer is, there is no set number. It all depends on the type of transmission that is happening. The district and WCHD has to look at multiple factors, like the ones listed above and additional information to determine when a building or district may have to close for a few weeks. Generally, each COVID-19 positive case is different, meaning it has different origins and it takes a lot of contact tracing and research in order to determine each origin. Do not assume that multiple positive cases in a given building or district came from one source.
7. One thing I know to be true is that in the absence of information, people will make up things. Since the district is not allowed to share information about cases, this presents a perfect storm of misinformation and rumors by individuals who may seek to obtain their information from unreliable sources such as social media or "asking around". I ask that as a community we recognize the difficult situation we are all in. The district and our buildings are doing their best to offer face-to-face instruction for those who have selected that model of instruction and our staff is working exceptionally hard to keep things as safe and clean as possible for all students. Please speak to your child's principal if you have questions and please give respect to those who might be sick or in

quarantine. There is a stigma attached to COVID-19 for some and we are learning that once others find out they or a family member has COVID-19 or must quarantine, not all community members are compassionate about their situation. In GSD, I would like to think that we all will extend compassion and support to those who are dealing directly with this situation. Accurate information is updated weekly on the dashboard of current cases. Participating in social media only causes rumors and misinformation and that can be harmful to those who may be sick or recovering. Please think before you post and when in doubt contact your child's principal. Additionally, school district employees are not allowed to share information about a positive case or a quarantining staff member or student as this is a violation of HIPPA and FERPA privacy laws.

Link to Dashboard: bit.ly/3kXfQcO

Your Partner in Education,

Amy Conway
Superintendent