

SALIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT R-32-J

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September 8, 2021

Dear Families and Community,

I want to continue to update you on our COVID data. There are some great things to celebrate. First, it is week four and we are again establishing that we can safely offer in-person programming. We have no known classroom transmission of the virus. We are thankful to parents of older children that have decided to get vaccinated. Local Public Health let us know that our 12-17 year old students are vaccinated at 65%, and the Salida community is at 75%. Getting vaccinated offers the greatest safety for you and those around you. If you are interested in knowing more, our school nurses would be glad to assist you.

We are tracking a cluster of positive cases. As these things go, the information is changing rapidly. What we knew yesterday morning was different than yesterday afternoon, and what I communicated at 7 a.m. meetings had changed by 9 a.m. We know that the most common transmission is happening through family households. We are a small town and family households impact all systems quickly. It will take the medical team a few days to unravel what is transpiring. In the meantime there is evidence that risks have increased. As such I am adding a layer of masks for all.

This mask mandate will be in place until the medical team can better understand how transmission is occurring among the student body, families and community. I will review the decision in 14 days. IF we do not see increased transmission within our students, then we can consider loosening this layer of protection back to personal responsibility.

To be clear, all students (3yrs-12th grade), staff, and visitors must wear a mask indoors. We will support students transitioning deeper into this expected change, and will hold a firm line come Monday morning.

In addition, I am still requiring all student participants in extra-curricular activities be tested once a week. Last year, these students saw the greatest impact on their education. I want to protect their ability to play, and we need real-time local data about our students participating in extracurriculars to drive decision making. After four weeks I will review this strategy to determine if it is helping us make decisions to protect extra-curricular activities.

So, there is much to celebrate, and much still to navigate. Continue to offer everyone around you grace and patience.

Respectfully,

David Blackburn
Superintendent
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