



McDonald, Kelly <kmcdonald@dcrsd.org>

DCRSD Update 04.01.2021

Dudley-Charlton Regional School District <notifications@dcrsd.org>

Thu, Apr 1, 2021 at 4:28 PM

To: Dudley-Charlton Regional School District <notifications@dcrsd.org>

All,

I am writing provide an update on a few items of importance.

To start, we know that COVID fatigue is real and settling in across our communities. I cannot stress how important it is for students to stay home if sick, especially if exhibiting the following symptoms;

- Fever (100 degrees F or higher)
- Chills
- New unexplained cough
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

- Headache
- Congestion/runny nose
- Fatigue

We know when a child stays home it is disruptive to routines and work, but none of us can control how disruptive COVID is if not addressed when symptoms emerge. By not keeping sick children home, there is the potential to impact the health, safety and well-being of large groups of students and staff. We ask that you work with your child's school nurse if you have question about symptoms and keeping your child home from school. All of our plans, protocols, strategies and guidance is geared towards symptoms, so we ask that symptoms continue to be taken seriously. Please review our [protocols](#) for more information. If you have additional questions, do not hesitate to connect with the [COVID Coordinator Ms. Anne Marie DeMorris](#).

As we started pooled testing this week we want to share a few points of consideration as we move forward with this invaluable tool at our disposal. After sampling just under 200 staff and students this week, in sample pools of not more than 10, we had two pools come back positive. As this is a surveillance testing tool, we are required to follow-up with our own testing in the event that we receive a positive group or pool. In one of the positive pools we were able to identify a single positive with follow-up testing. The other positive pool was retested on two separate occasions and yielded no positives. This was considered a false positive pooled testing sampling. We learned this week that the state will fund pooled testing for the remainder of the school year so this invaluable surveillance tool will be in place as we continue to increase in-person learning. You must complete a [consent](#) form to have your student participate in the pooled testing program.

The guidance from DESE, DPH and the CDC on who is considered a close contact has not changed. We have heard that it might, but we are following what is still expected in the area. This means, anyone who is within 6-feet for 15 minutes or longer to an identified positive case must be quarantined. The 15 minutes is cumulative, but with our current full in-person half days we moved to not less than 3-feet and almost all of our classrooms are set at less than 6-feet. We shared that this would increase the number of quarantines and increased quarantines are occurring. Increased quarantines will also occur as we increase student activities. We respectfully requesting your understanding as we know quarantines make parents, caregivers and students unhappy.

The COVID Coordinator and school nurses are working extremely hard to manage all of the communications, information and data tracking that comes from positive cases, quarantines, close contacts, and symptomatic students or staff. We can appreciate your view from a single household, but we are asking everyone to consider what this looks like as a district with over 4,000 students and staff. We moved to 10 days of symptom free quarantine but this requires self-monitoring (certification) by parents, caregivers and students for the remaining days to get to the original 14 days of quarantine. This has not been entirely successful as a lot of chasing of 10-day quarantine self-certification occurs during the necessary reporting period to 14 days, to include weekends. We do not want to move back to the 14-day quarantine, but we are not moving to the 7-day test out of quarantine as originally slated for Monday, April 5, 2021 until we collectively get a better handle on the 10-day quarantine with self-certification. We will target the return from April vacation as the potential starting

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point for the day 5 test out after 7 days of quarantine. We appreciate your patience and willingness to work with us as we put every effort forward to keep COVID out of our schools and welcome increased in-person learning to full days.

Respectfully,

Steven M. Lamarche

Superintendent of Schools