January 3, 2022

Happy New Year! I hope that all of you have had an opportunity to take time for yourself and your family over the past two weeks. 2021 was another difficult year, and it seems as if the start of 2022 promises to be more of the same. I do, however, firmly believe that our future successes depend on our community actively working together for the good of all our Bulldogs: teachers, staff, students, and families.

We have been successfully in-person for almost the entire first semester (which ends January 12). As a reminder, the majority of quarantine and positive cases among district students and staff since August came from outside exposure. Only one positive case has been traced back to in-school exposure. There is absolutely no doubt that this has been due to the commitment and diligence of our staff, students, and families in following our COVID-19 guidelines for our individual and collective health and safety.

Throughout the pandemic, our policies and health and safety procedures have been aligned with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), and Greene County Public Health (GCPH), and will continue to be so aligned. Please click here for the new guidance from ODH and GCPH. Our revised Health & Safety Plan is also available on our website.

So that we can plan accordingly based on our level of protection, we are requesting (not requiring) parents to report the vaccination status for their child(ren) using this form.

As we return to school, the team and I ask that you continue to do the following:

1. Get your child vaccinated for COVID-19! The booster for children 12-15 is expected to be approved this week.
2. Get vaccinated yourself, and get your booster shot, if you have not done so already.
3. Keep your child home when they are sick.
4. Communicate with the school if your child has tested positive or has been exposed to COVID-19.
5. Consider getting flu shots for your entire family.
6. Be consistent about mask-wearing, no matter where you are.
7. If you are feeling ill, please consider taking an at-home test. Although these are in extremely short supply now, we hope that test availability broadens within the next few weeks.

We will continue to monitor our absences and COVID-19 numbers daily so that we can make an informed decision about any change in educational delivery. Please know that it is our intention to remain in school for in-person learning. We have seen first hand the devastating mental health effects remote learning had on many of our students last year. Teaching remotely is also quite challenging for our staff who go above and beyond every day to serve their students.
The decision to go remote is tremendously difficult and is based on a number of factors. The decision to transition a class, grade level, or building to remote online learning for a defined period of time will be based on either (1) direction from ODH or GCPH; or (2) staffing availability due to COVID-related illness.

Building principals will discuss with students the materials they should always have ready in case of the need for remote learning. We understand the tremendous strain this decision to move to a remote delivery model puts on parents and families. We encourage families to make plans in the event that your child needs to transition temporarily to remote learning. Should you have a question about your child’s Chromebook, or if you feel you might need internet connection support in the event we are forced to change our delivery model, please reach out to your child’s principal.

One note about our athletic events. Parents and families, we need your cooperation. Even though our mask policy has not changed, and we are still a masks-required district, enforcement at our basketball games has been difficult. We know that many schools in our athletic league do not have mask requirements; however, the issue at our games has been not only with visiting parents but with our own parents and fans. We will have more staff at future games, and will still REQUIRE masks. Ultimately, should there be refusal to wear masks, we will either limit attendance at our events or move to a no spectator environment. We want to preserve the valuable extra-curricular experiences of our student-athletes.

Please be on the lookout for additional messages in the days ahead. Together, with vigilance and care, we can preserve the forward progress of this school year for our children and community.

Best,

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