November 2, 2020

Dear Bobcat families,

We wanted to update you all on the current situation regarding COVID-19 here at the school. We recognize that the nature of the situation is complicated and often confusing. This letter is intended to clear up some of that confusion and hopefully answer some questions and concerns that you likely have.

First, we want to be clear on a couple definitions. The Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) defines quarantine as, “staying home from work, school, and/or activities after a person was in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Quarantine lasts for 14 days (unless the person develops symptoms, then they will be put in isolation). Negative tests cannot be used to release a person from quarantine.” The expectation is that students who are deemed quarantined are in fact quarantining.

The CDPHE defines isolation as, “staying home from work, school, and activities when a person is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19. Isolation lasts for at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms and for 24 hours after being fever free without the aid of fever reducing medication. For people who have not had symptoms, isolation lasts 10 days from the day they had their first positive test. Public health experts do not recommend repeat testing to decide when to end the period of isolation.”

The entire sixth grade class and the football team began their 14 day quarantine on October 23. They will be released from quarantine after November 6. They were quarantined because a child in the sixth grade class, who is also on the football team, tested positive for COVID-19. Then on October 28, we were notified that a senior had developed symptoms of COVID-19 after being in close contact with individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. That student was last at the school on October 27. Following guidance from the CDPHE we decided to quarantine all high school students and staff as well as the rest of the middle school students and staff for 14 days. They will be released from quarantine after November 10.

Due to limited staffing resources and other logistical complications caused by these staggered quarantines we have decided to keep all secondary students out of school until after November 10th. To be clear, ALL SECONDARY STUDENTS (the middle school and the high school) will return to school on November 11.

As you likely know, the elementary school students have remained in school throughout all of this. This is because each individual elementary class has been operating as its own cohort and has been kept separate from the middle school and high school students. As defined by CDPHE, cohorting is,
“the practice of keeping the same students and teachers in the same small group at all times throughout the day.” There are a handful of common use areas that cohorts use at separate times throughout the day like the lunchroom and library. These areas are cleaned and sanitized to the best of our staff’s ability between cohorted classes. The practice of cohorting has its limitations, but it helps limit the number of contacts each individual has. As a result, when quarantines or dismissals are needed, they affect fewer people.

On Saturday, October 28, local physician Dr. Richard Amesquita, DO, and his team from Pueblo, graciously hosted a testing event here in the school parking lot that was offered to all students, staff, and their families. At this time, we do not have any of those test results back. We expect to get these results within the next day or so and will promptly notify families of our plan going forward. Although schools are required to disclose names of people with COVID-19 to public health authorities, like any other private health information, we cannot disclose that information to the public.

In summation, as of today, Monday, November 2, we have one student who has tested positive for COVID-19 and one student, who developed symptoms after being exposed to someone who tested positive with COVID-19, whose test results are pending.

The information cited in this letter and the guidelines that we are following are set forth by the CDPHE for all schools across the state. They can be found at: https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools

They are updated regularly and for this reason our response requires flexibility. Our team here at the school is dedicated to keeping students, staff and our community at large safe. Thank you for your patience and support.

Respectfully,

Mike McFalls

Michael McFalls
Superintendent