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Superintendent

KELLY ROTH  
Director of Student Services

DUSTY BURRESS  
Director of Support Services

MARY ANN BAINES  
Director of Financial Services

August 20, 2021

Dear Sunman-Dearborn Community School Corporation Parents:

As many of you are likely aware, an updated recommendation regarding masking has been issued by the Dearborn County Department of Health stating the department is “recommending masking for all indoor activities in the county when social distancing of three feet is not possible.”

For the 2021-2022 school year, the board has been charged with determining the various mitigation strategies and protocols that will be followed in our schools. At the June board meeting, the Return to In-Person (IPI) Plan was approved. Our primary goal was to return to school with limited COVID-19 protocols and provide our students as normal a school year as possible, while monitoring our local data to remain safe. At this time, there is no plan to modify our current protocols. Masks will continue to be optional.

Through the end of the day on Thursday, August 19th, we have had nineteen (19) COVID-19 positive students, and we currently have six (6) COVID-19 positive students excluded from school. The other thirteen (13) students have returned to school. We have fifteen (15) students who have been tested and are awaiting results. Approximately 18% of our students who are tested are confirmed positive, so it is likely three (3) of the students who are awaiting results will be positive. We have had five (5) staff members positive, and all have returned to school. The most compelling data is out of a total of 213 students and staff identified as close contacts in school only one (1) student has become COVID-19 positive. This data is consistent with last year as well. While there is the spread of COVID-19 in the community, it isn't being spread in our schools.

The Indiana Department of Health recommends all unvaccinated students and staff to wear a mask indoors. While I agree that masking can be one of several mitigation strategies a school can use to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the effectiveness of masking is diminished when used in isolation of other protocols used last school year (one-way hallways, extended lunches, limited capacity at events, no visitors, etc.), and even further diminished when not part of a coordinated effort outside of school in our community, region, and state.

Parents will continue to be allowed to make an informed decision about their student in our schools and the choice to have their child wear a mask. We will continue to be true to this ideal, as long as

the data supports our ability to do so safely. We are also offering a full K-12 online option with the Sunman-Dearborn Online Academy.

Obviously, our data can quickly change. I will continue to monitor our student and staff COVID-19 data throughout the school day and rely on our local data in making decisions regarding the various protocols recommended at school.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools.

#WatchSunmanDearborn

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'n'.

Andrew Jackson  
Superintendent