

Herscher Community Unit School District No. 2

DR. RICHARD S. DECMAN, SUPERINTENDENT
SHELLY PARSONS, SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
PETE FALK, CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

November 12, 2020

Dear Herscher CUSD #2 Parents/Guardians,

As many of you are aware, the COVID-19 testing positivity rate in our area is on the rise. Given that trend, I want to provide you with some information specific to our district. We have implemented our Return to School Plan through approximately 54 attendance days of school, and I remain extremely pleased with the learning opportunities we have been able to offer our students during these challenging times. As of this week, approximately 70% of our students participate in our daily in-person learning activities. Approximately 10% of our students have chosen to be full-time remote learners and the remaining 20% * are participating in remote learning on any given day per IDPH and/or ISBE guidelines which recommend that we exclude students who show any COVID-19 symptoms or who are considered close contacts.

Our faculty and staff members continue to do an amazing job of balancing their responsibilities to both our in-person and remote learners. This is not an easy task but our faculty/staff have been committed to accommodating all students from the first day of school.

This is the current breakdown of our in-person and remote learners by grade level:

	Remote Learners	In-Person Learners	% of Remote Learners	% of In-Person Learners
PreK	19	56	25	75
K	66	66	50	50
1	59	51	54	46
2	27	79	25	75
3	32	88	27	73
4	23	79	23	77
5	39	83	32	68
6	31	115	21	79
7	44	88	33	67
8	41	95	30	70
9	12	99	11	89
10	32	90	26	74
11	35	91	28	72
12	35	86	29	71

Since our first day of student attendance on August 20th, we have been tracking positive COVID-19 cases of students and staff in our district. Whenever we experience a positive case, we follow all IDPH guidelines in terms of contact tracing and quarantines. When we developed our Return to School Plan, we fully expected to experience positive COVID-19 cases, which is why we have specific protocols in place when this occurs. We also report each positive case and the results of all contact tracing to the Kankakee County Health Department. * The KCHD is no longer accepting information from districts and is now requiring districts to do their own contact tracing.

"Education... The Ultimate Investment."

Herscher Community Unit School District No. 2

DR. RICHARD S. DECMAN, SUPERINTENDENT
SHELLY PARSONS, SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
PETE FALK, CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

Although we have experienced positive cases, to date, we have had only two incidents between students and staff where there was a possibility of transmission. Obviously, we wish we never had a positive case among our students or staff, but we understand this is not a realistic expectation.

The encouraging news is the evidence continues to show we are not experiencing transmission of the virus at any of our schools. For every one of our positive COVID-19 cases to date, (with two exceptions mentioned in the previous paragraph), we have been able to contact trace back to a source outside of school. Thus far, we have seen little to no evidence of any “close contacts” who are excluded from school testing positive for COVID-19. This remains true despite the recent increase in cases we have experienced in our area the last 2-3 weeks. It is also important to remember that oftentimes, when we see multiple cases in a week, the positive cases are coming or can be contact traced back to large social gatherings or from the same family with multiple children in our district. In summary, the data continues to show that the mitigation strategies being followed within our buildings have been effective. That being said, I do want to provide you with the most current data as to the number of positives cases we have experienced since the start of the school year on August 20th. I plan to continue to update the school community on a weekly basis.

Positive Cases Since the Beginning of the School Year

	Students	Faculty/Staff
BGS	11	3
HIS	7	5
LMS	12	3
HHS	14	4
TOTAL	44	15

The COVID-19 metrics for our county are trending in the wrong direction, which is why we continue to need your assistance to ensure our schools can continue to offer in-person learning opportunities for our students. The IDPH recently released new guidance that urges Illinois residents to stay home and only leave for “essential activities.” The IDPH guidance further states, “our goal is to reduce transmission as we head into the holidays, so businesses and schools can remain open.” Click the following link to view the latest guidance: https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/idph-issues-new-guidance-urging-residents-to-stay-home-and-leave-only-for-essential-activities/2367781/?_osource=db_npd_nbc_wmaq_eml_shr

Please continue to reinforce and model to your children the importance of facemasks outside of school, handwashing, and social distancing. When our students are at school, we have strict health and safety protocols in place that have proven effective in keeping our students safe. However, the school district can only do so much and has no control over what happens once our students walk out the doors each day. By reinforcing and modeling proper mitigation strategies outside of school, we enhance our chances of continuing to offer face-to-face instructional and extra-curricular opportunities that we believe are invaluable to the academic and social-emotional health of all of our students.

* 2% are currently remote learning due to lack of faculty

Educationally Yours,

Dr. Richard S. Decman
Superintendent of Schools

“Education... The Ultimate Investment.”