

**Board Meeting Date: November 18, 2021**

## **COVID-19 Board Report**

**PURPOSE:** Provide an Update about District 191's efforts to implement COVID-19 related educational and public health guidance issued by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), respectively.

### **Overview:**

Tonight's report will include information from the Minnesota Department of Health, provide an overview of the Minnesota and 191 COVID-19 data, information regarding our vaccination clinics for children ages 5-11 years old and an operational update.

### **Health and Safety Update (MDH):**

The pediatric confirmed covid-19 cases are surging. In a presentation to AMSD Superintendents, Dan Huff, assistant commissioner of MDH shared that "Cases in 5 -11 year olds have surpassed all previous peaks. Cases in 5-11 are driving cases. Hospital capacity is at crisis level".

This week Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm and Sheldon Berkowitz, the president of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) sent a letter to superintendents and school board members. In her letter she stated the following: "The past 19 months have been enormously challenging for our schools, our families and our children. We are grateful for your leadership and resiliency during these trying times and want to support you in making this a successful school year. We are writing today to express our concern with high cases of COVID 19 in Minnesota school children. While children are generally less impacted by COVID 19 than adults, they are still at risk for severe disease, hospitalization, and death. About 1 in every 100 children with COVID 19 ends up in the hospital. Further, some children experience ongoing symptoms for a prolonged period after acute infection, even if that infection has been mild (long COVID). Since school started this fall, we have seen an alarming rise in childhood cases and a subsequent rise in hospitalized children and children admitted into intensive care, and sadly, one student has died. Additionally, eight Minnesota school staff have become infected and died of COVID since school began this fall.

Minnesota's students benefit from in-person learning and enabling in-person instruction as safely as possible for the 2021-2022 school year for all students is a priority. However, without effective disease mitigation strategies in place, children and school staff are being put at undue risk".

They recommended the layered mitigation strategies. These include promoting vaccinations for any eligible teachers, staff, parents and children 5 year of age or older, Universal masking, physical distancing, stay home when sick, screening and testing; ventilation ; contact tracing and quarantine; notify MDH about confirmed cases in schools and teaching appropriate hand washing and respiratory etiquette and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.

We have been employing these mitigation strategies and our staff is monitoring and adjusting their strategies as we get confirmed cases.

Now Bernie Bien, our lead licensed school nurse will provide some data, testing and vaccine clinic information.

**Updates:** Local Data (MN, Dakota/Scott County and 191)

**Data:**

Our state and community continues to be in a High level of community transmission for COVID-19 and continuing to see a surge in COVID cases.

MN:

Statewide positivity is 10.5% and the Breakthrough infection rate has increased from 2% last week to 2.2% this week.

From the most recent MN data, in the school age population, particularly 10-19yo the positivity rate is over 10%. In DC 19.5% of new cases this week were in kids under 12.

The rate of new hospital COVID admissions is over the high risk threshold. In DC the majority of new hospitalizations continue to be in people 40 and over however 20% of new hospitalizations were in people under 40.

Statewide numbers released today indicate close to 30 deaths. In DC 4 deaths were reported. Positive cases in MN for the last 24 hours are nearing 5000 cases. Minnesota has the highest 7-day case rate in the United States and all but one county are in the "high" transmission category.

7 day Case Rate for positive cases per 100K

Dakota

- Current 509.77      Last week it was 325.39  
Positivity for today per CDC is 12.18%

Scott

- Current 685.18 Last week it was 389.23  
Positivity for today per CDC is 15.57%

### **191 positive cases and investigations**

As of 11/14 - We have been informed of 44 positive cases among staff with 37 cases resulting in a case investigation due to being infectious while in building. Last week positive cases was 32

For students we have been informed of 176 positive cases with 125 requiring a case investigation. Last week's positive cases was 150.

### **191 case investigations**

Investigations completed two weeks ago were 21. Last week we completed 30 This week thus far we have completed 37 investigations.

At the end of last week 446 students were out due to the effects of COVID and the prior week 194.

The rise in covid cases is definitely concerning for our community. This is the time to double down on mitigation strategies and for each of us to be covid smart. In other words we need to focus on the basics: good mask wearing and physical distancing, testing and vaccination. Most importantly stay home when sick. COVID does not come with a purple rash that is easy to identify. With high transmission even one minor symptom should cause us to pause and wonder if it could be covid.

### **Operational Update:**

We applaud the work of our Food and Nutrition Services staff. We still have positions open in our Food Service department.

Our bus contractor Schmitty and Sons is still able to maintain drivers for our routes.

You may have heard of several districts being dropped by their primary food distributor in the last few months. Our primary distributor, Upper Lakes Foods, from Cloquet, MN is in it for the long haul and doing whatever they can to support schools. They are experiencing a shortage of employees and we feel the repercussions of this by having deliveries later than usual. Our main distributor who we, and many other MN metro districts, purchased most of our a la carte offerings from, closed permanently last summer. Another company has reached out to schools to fill this void but we have not engaged with them since we do not sell much a la carte.

On a weekly basis, we are shorted many items and/or substituted food items and have to make several menu changes. There are nationwide shortages on some of our popular

chicken and egg products and we are finding substitutions. We have seen some price increases but wouldn't say they are at the "gouging" point. We are also in a few purchasing groups and have some prices locked in, for now. We also created a menu that is very dependent on commodity foods and for the most part are getting those. Next year, we are sure to see many price increases.