

Red Wing Public Schools
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School Board Meeting Agenda Item

Topic: Shortened Quarantine for Students
Contact(s):
Presenter(s): Karsten Anderson, Superintendent

Nature of Action Requested

Board Action
Board Information or Report

X

Background Information

Cited Resource(s)

- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH-1), Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19, February 16, 2021
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH-2), MDH Sports Quarantine Clarification, February 19, 2021

Other Resource(s)

- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH-3), COVID-19 Decision-Tree for People in Schools, Youth, and Child Care Programs.

Communication of Quarantine Standard

During a board meeting on January 7th (beginning at about the 5-minute/30-second mark of the board video), Shanda Jorgenson presented information about quarantine options:

- 7-day quarantine option requiring a negative test after day 5
- 10-day quarantine option
- 14-day quarantine option

There was no formal board action, but our intention to follow the 14-day quarantine option for students was clearly communicated to board members and the public. Other district communications reinforced this plan.

Recent Incident

Recently, however, an incident prompted a review of these guidelines. Consistent with previous decisions, the varsity girls hockey team was quarantined for 14 days.. This means players will miss their last week of the regular season and the first playoff game. Unless Red Wing wins the first playoff game without its varsity team members, the season ends for the varsity team.

Need to Quarantine

Questions were raised about whether Red Wing players needed to quarantine. Players may not have been “within 6 feet of someone contagious with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more over the course of a day (24)” (MDH-1) because of one practice or game. However, MDH-1 also stated that “people who had direct physical or intimate contact (e.g., kissing, hugging, other types of physical contact) with a person who is sick with COVID-19” must be quarantined. As a result, most, if not all, players likely need to quarantine.

Consideration to Change Quarantine Standard

Changing the quarantine standard to 7 or 10 days was also considered. MDH-2 indicated that individuals may resume normal activities after stopping a shortened quarantine, but “individuals (whether in school or sports activities) who meet the criteria for a shortened quarantine are still recommended to maintain social distancing (6 feet) through day 14, even if they are released from quarantine prior to that. For sports activities that involve close contact, and for many in-person learning activities as well, maintaining 6 feet of social distancing is challenging.”

Further, MDH-2 indicated that a “shortened quarantine period may be considered for return to play:

- If the athlete was WEARING A MASK at the time of exposure AND
- If both of the following are true:
 - The person has NOT had symptoms of COVID-19 during the quarantine period.
 - The person does NOT live with someone who has COVID-19”

And, finally, MDH-2 also states that using a shortened quarantine “carries additional risk of transmission, and it is important that school and sports administrators understand that they are choosing to assume this risk.”

Because the 14-day quarantine standard was clearly communicated to the board and public and the issue is of significant importance, I will not implement a different standard unless an alternative is presented during a public board meeting.

Other Schools

Paul Hartmann surveyed Big 9 schools about their quarantine standards. 5 schools use the 7-day standard, 1 uses the 10-day standard, and 6 uses the 14-day standard.

Consultation

While reviewing this issue with respect to the girls varsity hockey team, the following people or organizations were consulted:

- Minnesota Department of Education
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Red Wing COVID Response Team
- Red Wing Activities Department
- Activities Directors of Big 9 Schools

Recommendation

Options

1. I move to continue to use the 14-day quarantine standard for students with a full review by the board in April.

Note: This is the recommendation of the COVID Response Team

2. I move to use the 10-day quarantine standard for students effective immediately if students produce a negative PCR test result taken in days 8-10.
3. I move to refer the issue about quarantine standards to the Superintendent.

Note: If this is selected, the Superintendent will review the recommendation of the COVID Response Team and confer with the Activities Director and the RWHS Principal before making a decision.