

Saranac Central School District

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December 10, 2020

Good Afternoon,

First of all, I want to apologize as I intended to get this message out yesterday but, I had a personal matter that I have been dealing with which delayed my communication.

The personal matter I have been dealing with is that yesterday I tested positive for COVID-19. I woke up on Tuesday feeling very fatigued and I thought possibly a bit achy. So as our protocols dictate, I stayed home and scheduled a COVID-19 test and a checkup with my doctor's office. On Wednesday I woke up feeling a bit better so I was certain that I would test negative but unfortunately, I was wrong. I have been dealing with the logistics of an isolation order for myself and quarantine orders for my family. Mostly I am very frustrated as I feel that I have worked hard to follow all the guidance to remain virus free. I take this as clear proof that none of us are immune to this virus.

Let me update you on the data I have and the communication I have had with the Clinton County Health Department.

What we know

- We have had 4 confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported to our district.
- These cases have resulted in all 4 of our buildings being exposed.
- We have had over 100 people quarantined because of this exposure.
- There are 2 other cases that we are following in the community that have had family members test positive and awaiting test results for students who have been in our buildings.
- Currently there is no apparent connection between any of these cases. This is important as it is more concerning from the Health Department's perspective. They have explained to me that typically when you find multiple cases in a community there are connections like a place of work, a gathering, or something else that connects them. The fact that there is no connection is concerning because this proves that the virus is present and has spread within our community.
- The virus has entered our buildings but has not been spread in our buildings.
- This is a unique situation that our district has been faced with. There have been cases in other districts but again the number of cases in such a short time with no connection in our community makes this situation unique and very concerning.

Things to consider

- The Clinton County Health Department is strongly recommending that we remain under remote instruction at least until after the break. They would also like us to consider remaining remote for two weeks after the break.
- The Clinton County Health Department and I were in discussions about the possibility of quarantining our entire district. In the end it was quickly discovered that there was not enough evidence to take such an action but just the fact that we discussed it as an option left me feeling very concerned and overwhelmed. It was discussed because all 4 of our buildings have been exposed in such a short time and again there being no connection between all our recent cases.

The Plan

- We will remain under remote instruction until at least January 4th for all buildings in the Saranac School District.
- During this time, I will continue to communicate with the Health Department about the presence of the virus within our specific community. I will use this communication and the data they provide to make decisions about in-person instruction after the break.

We find ourselves in a unique situation which has called for these actions. What is not unique to our community is that it continues to be important that we follow the current guidelines to decrease the spread of the virus. This time of year is very concerning for our situation as it is typically a very social time for us all. If we want to get our students back into our buildings, it is important that we refrain from the behaviors that have put us in this situation. We are all guilty to some degree and we could all certainly do better. It is important that we not travel over the holidays and if we do then quarantine as required afterwards. That our celebrations over the holiday only include those who live in our homes. That we slow our children down and keep them home as much as possible. If you are not able to follow these guidelines, then place your children in remote instruction so that others are not affected. These are the things that will result in our community being able to have our children attend in-person instruction.

These are the exact same things that I ask of my faculty and staff and like I said we could all do better in following the guidelines.

You can expect further communication from teachers and Principals regarding the continued remote instruction. We will also continue to deliver meals based on the list we currently have. Remember that meals are free to all students at this time and if you are not receiving meals but would like to please call Mr. Dirolf at (518)565-5705.

These are difficult times in our country and specifically in our community. It becomes so important for all of us to do our part to keep each other safe through these times.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding of this very difficult situation.

Sincerely,

Javier Perez
Saranac Central Superintendent