

November 5, 2020

Dear Hornet Family,

Following an additional meeting with our advising team of medical professionals, teachers, administrators, and parents, it has been decided that the current learning modes will remain in place through November 24th, the last day before Thanksgiving Break.



Similar to what many locations are experiencing throughout the United States, Sedgwick County, USD 262, and the communities we serve are experiencing the highest rates of COVID-19 since the pandemic began. This is particularly true for those in their teenage years or older. Doctors and nurses on the frontlines have shared their increased concerns due to a shortage of ICU hospital beds in our area. Additionally, the number of patients they are seeing is straining our area medical providers.

Currently, we have 196 students who are not able to attend in person learning opportunities/activities due to having the virus, awaiting test results, someone in their home is positive, or they have been determined to be a close contact with someone who is positive. There are 50 staff members who are in the same situation. This past week, due to these staff absences and a shortage of substitute teachers, we've had to temporarily transfer staff members from Valley Center High School to cover positions at one of our elementary buildings. It's possible over the coming weeks that a school could experience a temporary closure if it's not possible to safely operate due to a lack of staff.

Although our data shows that most of our students, staff, and families who have experienced COVID related absences were a result of interactions and activities outside of our school day, we are continuing to follow our safety protocols and guidelines to help mitigate the risks of exposure in our schools. Those safety protocols appear to be working and decreasing the spread of COVID-19 within our schools.

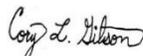
We all want to be able to safely have our kids in school. As individuals and as a community, we all need to refocus our efforts and commitment in order to stabilize/decrease the transmission of COVID-19.

This is where we need your help, Hornet Family...help us keep our schools open and our community members safe. Please follow the same safety protocols in the community as our students and staff do at school.

This includes:

- Wearing masks in public
- Social distancing
- Avoiding large gatherings
- If you don't feel well, stay home
- Hand sanitization
- Decreasing the number of exposures outside of the family unit (birthday parties, sleepovers, etc.)

It is essential that we all band together. We must slow the spread. I encourage you to join me and others in making these sacrifices, because I believe it is worth it if it means our students can remain attending school in person, athletics/activities continue, and most importantly, for the health and safety of all members and supporters of our Hornet Family.



Proud Superintendent of Valley Center Schools

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