



December 8, 2020

Dear Hornet Family,

The COVID-19 virus has negatively impacted many in our families, schools, and community. The week leading up to Thanksgiving break was especially rough for our staff, as the transmission rate was more than double that of the county's averages. The number of Hornets battling the virus decreased last week. However, in the past two days, we've experienced an increase again. Following an additional meeting with our advising team of medical professionals, teachers, administrators, and parents, it was determined the current learning modes will remain in place through the winter break. The team will reconvene the week of December 21, reevaluate our data, with the hopes of establishing a reentry plan for January.

Similar to what many locations are experiencing throughout the United States, Sedgwick County, USD 262, and the communities we serve are experiencing high rates of COVID-19. It is expected the transmission of the virus will accelerate over the next few weeks due to Holiday gatherings. Doctors and nurses on the frontlines have shared their increased concerns due to a shortage of ICU hospital beds in our area, an increase in the number of patients they are seeing, and an increase in the severity of many Covid cases including deaths. All these factors are placing a huge strain on our area medical providers.

We all want to have our kids safely in school, and we recognize when school is not in session, it adds additional challenges for our families. As individuals and as a community, each of us needs to refocus our efforts and commitment in order to help decrease the transmission of COVID-19. It is essential that we band together to slow the spread. I encourage you to join me and others in making a commitment to do all we can to increase the likelihood of getting our kids back in school and more importantly, to improve the health and safety of all members and supporters of our Hornet Family.

Please commit to:

- Wearing masks in public
- Social distancing
- Avoiding large gatherings
- Staying home when sick
- Hand sanitization
- Decreasing the number of exposures outside of the family unit (birthday parties, sleepovers, etc.)

Over the next several days, we will be sending additional information on a variety of important topics. We will be sharing potential changes to the school calendar, additional opportunities to qualify for internet hotspot access, free student meals during winter break, expanded COVID 19 testing options for families, and changes to quarantine requirements. Although less than an ideal situation, USD 262 is committed to providing as much assistance as possible to our families and communities during this time.

*Proud Superintendent of Valley Center Schools*

*NOTE: also included is a copy of our most recent COVID related data*

**Dr. Cory L. Gibson**

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## COVID TRACKING

