



December Family Update

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ADM Families,

As always, the time between Thanksgiving and the winter holiday season goes by so quickly. I do hope you have an enjoyable and restful break during this season. We are in our seventeenth week of full-time, in-person instruction and I count this as a huge win under these circumstances. It has all been due to a deep commitment by our staff to keep focused on what is best for students even when things are challenging. While difficult, our people are tough, resilient and committed to doing all we can to keep learning on-site.

The call to keep students learning on-site is clear at both the national and state level. On Thursday, November 19, CDC Director Robert Redfield stated "Today, there is extensive data that we have gathered over the last two to three months to confirm that K-12 schools can operate with face-to-face learning and they can do it safely and they can do it responsibly. The infections we have identified in the schools, when they have been evaluated, were not acquired in schools. They were acquired in the community and the household." Director Redfield went on to say "It is not interschool transmissions. The truth is for kids K-12, one of the safest places they can be, from our perspective, is to remain in school."

Over the course of November, there was an increase in the state in positive cases and hospitalizations due to Covid. Both of these measures have been trending down significantly over the past three weeks. In fact, the Dallas County positivity rate dipped below 15% today (14.9%) down significantly from a high of over 21% in November. Another important variable we monitor is our student attendance rate. Our last five day attendance rate was 94.28%. This compares very favorably with our last year's average daily attendance of 95.34%.

As of 12/14 we have a total of 14 current positive student cases (0.66% of total students) and 4 current positive staff members (1.24% of total staff). Our data also currently demonstrates that staff and students are not likely to become positive if exposed to Covid while at school. In fact, of the 127 students found to have been exposed to a positive case while at school and placed in quarantine by the health department, 0 have subsequently tested positive within 14 days.

We have also worked very hard to ensure that we have an adequate substitute teacher pool in order to manage teacher absences due to isolation or quarantine. Our "fill rate" for all teacher vacancies is very high and this contributes to much less stress on our system when vacancies are covered. In fact, our fill rate this past week was higher than the same week a year ago in 2019.

The vast majority - 92% - of Iowa schools are having in-person learning with 50% or more of instruction taking place on site. Only 8% of Iowa's public school districts are fully remote or have one or more buildings in remote learning status.

The ADM Board of Education reviewed our [most recent Covid data at the December 14 Regular Board Meeting](#). Our local data clearly supports the continuation of full-time, on-site learning (with parent option for remote learning). Have a great break, and we will see everyone back on January 4!

COVID-19 Numbers at ADM

Travis Wilkins, Director of Innovative Learning and Communication

ADM continues to study a variety of metrics to make determinations about the learning format most appropriate given the current context of COVID-19 in the school and broader community. Below are current student COVID numbers at ADM. Parents and

community members can view all COVID-19 positive case notices and the ADM COVID-19 Dashboard at ADM's COVID-19 website: www.admschools.org/COVID19.

Positive Cases: The following data represents the current and historical numbers of positive cases of COVID-19 at ADM.

- **Current:** As of 12/14/20, ADM currently has 14 (0.66%) positive students and 4 (1.24%) positive staff members.
- **Historical:** As of 12/14/20, ADM has had 81(3.82%) students and 39 (12.15%) staff members test positive for COVID-19 since the start of the school year.

Quarantines: The following data represents the current and historical numbers of individuals identified by the local health department as close contacts who are required to quarantine due to an exposure to COVID-19.

- **Current:** As of 12/14/20, ADM has 74 (3.78%) students and 0 (0.00%) staff members in quarantine.
- **Historical:** As of 12/14/20, ADM has had 519 students and 34 staff members placed in quarantine since the start of the school year.

The majority of students and staff identified as close contacts have been quarantined due to an exposure to COVID-19 that takes place OUTSIDE of the school setting. The following data represents the historical numbers of individuals identified by the local health department as close contacts who were required to quarantine, comparing exposures taking place at ADM and exposures taking place outside of ADM.

- **Historical - Exposed At ADM:** As of 12/14/20, ADM has had 127 students identified by the local health department as close contacts and quarantined due to an exposure to COVID-19 **in a school classroom, on a school bus, or an ADM event**. Of these 127 students, 0 ended up testing positive during their quarantine period.
- **Historical - Exposed Outside Of ADM:** In contrast, as of 12/14/20, there have been 382 students identified as a close contact due to an exposure taking place **outside of a school classroom, bus, or ADM event**. These are close contacts that are likely to have occurred whether or not ADM School was even in session, as they typically occur over the weekend, at family events, social gatherings, etc.

County Positivity Rate: The county positivity rate measures the percentage of individuals that receive a COVID-19 test who test positive. The data is reported daily in each county using a 14-day average.

- On August 12, the Dallas County Positivity Rate was 7.0%. As of 12/14/20, the county positivity rate is 15.4%.

Average Daily Attendance Rate: The average daily attendance rate measures the average daily attendance rate for students expected to learn on-site or virtually but who were unable to participate due to illness or absence.

- During the 2019-20 school year, ADM's average daily attendance rate was 95.34%. As of 12/14/20, ADM's 5-day average attendance rate was 94.28%. At this time, it does not appear that COVID-19 is having a significant impact on ADM's 5-day average daily attendance rate, as the current average rate is only slightly lower when compared to the 2019-20 school year average.

On-site and Remote Learners: Currently 93.01% of ADM students are attending school on site, with 6.99% of ADM students enrolled in the second 9-week remote learning period from October 26 - January 19.

Iowa Department of Education Quarantine Changes: On December 2, the Iowa Department of Public Health released new quarantine guidelines that reduce the quarantine period for individuals exposed to COVID-19 from 14 days to 10 days. Additionally, quarantined individuals are now able to reduce their quarantine period from 10 days to 7 days with a negative test taken on day 5 or later of their quarantine period. The Dallas County Health Department has adopted these new rules which will now apply to ADM students identified for quarantine by the health department.

Furthermore, the new guidelines require that individuals who return from quarantine after 7 or 10 days to wear a mask through 14 days following their initial exposure to COVID-19. Therefore, PS-12 grade students who return from quarantine will now be required to wear a mask at all times, including athletic practice and events until the conclusion of their 14-day mitigation period.

Adel Elementary Face Coverings: At this time Adel Elementary students are not required to wear face masks. The ADM Health and Safety Return To Learn Committee met three times over the past several months to review new guidance and to review data about the current impact of COVID at Adel Elementary. It was decided to continue with masks being optional at the K-2 level and that the committee would revisit the topic if conditions change in the future.

Over the past few weeks, we have received a handful of questions asking how a positive case at Adel Elementary, where masks are not required, could result in zero quarantines. The simple answer is that the majority of cases where students have tested positive in grades PS-5 have occurred with students who were never on-site during a time when they could have exposed another student. This can be seen in the 5 positive student cases that were reported during November at Adel Elementary, where all 5 students who tested positive had already been quarantined due to a household member being positive with COVID-19.

This follows a trend that we have seen in the elementary grades, where of the 19 PS-5 grades students who have tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the school year, 14 of the 19 had not been on-site during a time when they could have exposed another student. Furthermore, every positive case involving an ADM student or employee is completed with the Dallas County Health Department who makes all determinations of quarantine, which is the information communicated in the daily COVID-19 case email update sent to all families and staff and the end of each day.

ADM Wellness Screener: Families are reminded to use the [ADM COVID-19 Daily Wellness Screener](#) to identify if they are ill and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. This tool has been created in consultation with the Dallas County Health Department to help families and staff determine if and when they should come to school. One of the most critical safety mitigation measures is for staff and students to stay home when not feeling well. If you ever have any questions about whether your child should come to school or not, please reach out to the building nurse. They are very adept at helping work through these questions with families.

As always, don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions. I appreciate your trust, patience and understanding through all of this. Have a great holiday break!

Sincerely,

Greg Dufoe, ADM Superintendent