

Dear Parents,

Tuesday night at our CA school board I shared the following information:

As principals (Missy, Barbara, and I), our job during COVID has been to look after the health of our students. With that said you entrusted us with more than their physical wellbeing, we are also expected to look after their academic, social, emotional, and spiritual health. I shared with the board that there are two issues that we are extremely concerned with: there are obvious academic gaps stemming from COVID issues (online education, quarantining, and illness) and social/emotional concerns have increased 10-fold in our young people (with obvious correlation to COVID issues). I will admit, this all came to a head for me, when I had to ask one of our high school students to quarantine. This young lady had been quarantined multiple times, in a very short time span. She was extremely discouraged as she struggles with learning at home and her grades reflect it (she NEEDS to be in class with a teacher).

Below is the process our Administrative Team used to conclude it was time to revisit our CA COVID policy with our school board:

1. We have had very few cases of COVID transmission at school, except for the Elementary at the beginning of this year.
2. In reviewing our COVID quarantine procedure, we are hard-pressed to find a single case of a student that was quarantined and then tested positive (with a noticeable exception at the Elementary).
3. We spoke our advisory physician group (Dr. Clifford, Dr. Ermer, Dr. Hold, Dr. Moody, Dr. Champion-Bell) to get their guidance on this situation. They also have similar concerns, as they too have seen the negative effects of COVID mitigation. Their input helped shape our thought pattern going forward.
4. We spoke with several of our local, private schools to see if they have experienced similar concerns. If they have experienced this concern, we asked how they have addressed the situation? We found that several schools have not quarantined this entire school year, with no outbreaks or concerns. They chose this direction to specifically address the concerns we have. As a side note - this school year, compared to last school year, the health department/state is no longer doing any contact tracing. Many of our public schools simply do not have the ability to contact trace. The responsibility for this process has all been placed on individual schools, which we have been doing this school year.

The information gathered was presented to our school board officers. After receiving our report, the officers encouraged our Administrative team to bring a COVID recommendation to the entire school board that was based on our findings. As a clarification, there is a clear delineation between ECEC to 5th grade and 6th to 12th graders that have had ample time to vaccinate if they so choose.

At our school board meeting this past Tuesday night, our Administrative team did bring a recommendation to the school board that was unanimously approved. See the approved CA

COVID policy (for Middle & High only) revision below, which will begin this coming Monday, Nov. 8, 2021 (affects only close contact quarantining):

The new CA Quarantine/close contact process will afford students the opportunity to NOT miss school. When a student tests positive, CA will continue to do contact tracing and notify parents. Students that have been in "close contact" can stay in/return to school providing they are fully vaccinated or do one of the following:

- wear a mask for five consecutive school days (which includes the weekend for a total of 7 days – parental decision on masking at home)
- take a COVID test (rapid, home, etc.) with a negative result – notify Brittany Underwood or building administrative secretary

Parents can choose to quarantine their own child which will be an excused absence. CA Administration will monitor this new policy closely. If our experience is positive, CA Administration **may elect to move away from requirements listed above OR may need to strengthen close contact quarantines if our community or school COVID situation worsens.**

This policy is only for the Middle & High at this time. ECEC-5th will continue to follow the policy of the Hamilton County Health Department until it an appropriate time is determined to follow the above policy.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me to ask for clarifications or share concerns. Just as a side note – To bolster our Resource Café in addressing academic concerns, we will now have our high school Math Club doing tutoring after school (Monday-Thursday) to help students that are struggling in math:). We will work with the Middle to offer the same service. To bolster our mental health concerns, we are looking for ways to connect students and use our counselors/chaplains across all buildings. I so appreciate our school board for recognizing the peril our young people are facing in all facets of life!