

Subject: Fwd: Managing the COVID-19 Surge

Date: Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 8:41:50 PM Pacific Standard Time

From: Scott Lewis

To: Megan Wood

scott@voiceofsandiego.org

619.325.0527

@vosdscott

Begin forwarded message:

From: San Diego Unified <sdcs-info@sandi.net>
Date: January 13, 2022 at 8:15:12 PM PST
To: Scott Lewis <scott.lewis@voiceofsandiego.org>
Subject: **Managing the COVID-19 Surge**
Reply-To: no-reply@sandi.net

Dear San Diego Unified Family,

Across the country, the Omicron variant is challenging school communities and preventing large numbers of students and teachers from coming to class every day. Although San Diego Unified is experiencing these same challenges, we continue to believe that school is the best place for students to be. This has been demonstrated by multiple studies showing students are actually safer in school than in communities where the virus is widespread.

We are encouraged by the advice we have received from medical experts predicting that the current COVID-19 surge is a temporary situation. However, we cannot afford to be complacent. It is clear the new variant is highly contagious and has infected thousands of children nationwide already. The purpose of this email is to share how we plan to keep classrooms open during the current surge, as well as what will happen should that become impossible.

First, we plan to use every available option to keep classrooms open. For the next month, we have authorized principals to use other certificated staff to supervise students when teachers and substitutes are unavailable. This is permitted under our Administrative Procedure 7293, which allows us to assign non-school site staff to schools when we have a shortage of certificated employees at a site. Principals are taking other measures, as well, including moving students outdoors during good weather and into large indoor spaces.

Our administrators, educators and support staff will continue to work together to create a positive school environment, but we want to be transparent about the fact your student(s) will very likely experience one or more of the following over the next few weeks, while COVID-19 is surging and these special measures are in place.

1. Supervision by substitutes or centralized personnel

2. Class work in a “learning lab,” or study hall type of environment
3. Instructional time replaced by self-paced activities

Again, these are temporary measures required by the pandemic, and employing these strategies will allow us to keep classrooms open.

If, after exhausting all available options, a principal - working with his/her district support team - determines it is unsafe to continue with in-person instruction due to severe staffing shortages, she/he may ask a COVID Impact Day (similar to a heat day) to be declared at their school. The district will engage with County Health officials, the San Diego County Office of Education, and the California Department of Education (CDE) before making that declaration. COVID Impact Days will be non-instructional days. In the event a COVID Impact Day is declared, parents will be informed by phone, email and district website announcements. Food distribution and support for students in crisis will still be available.

We also want to remind parents that during this time period both general illness and mental/emotional health needs are considered excused absences. Students out for any of these reasons will be able to make up any missed assignments.

The State of California does not require schools to close once a particular COVID-19 case rate has occurred on campus, and no one should anticipate any district decision to return all students across the city to online learning. Rather, San Diego Unified health leaders will consult with their County colleagues in order to establish an appropriate threshold of positivity rates above which they do not advise the continued operation of a particular school facility.

In addition to the above measures, San Diego Unified has also:

1. Directed all departments to cancel any non-essential activities that remove teachers and staff from classrooms, such as trainings and professional development.
2. Established a rapid return-to-work testing station to help clear employees quickly after positive tests and/or close contacts.
3. Cancelled non-essential indoor activities such as field trips, school assemblies and dances.
4. Delivered thousands of N95, or similar style, masks to schools and expanded mask enforcement.

Finally, masks, testing and vaccines continue to be the best way for you to protect your family. Safe and effective vaccines are now available for nearly all students over the age of 5. San Diego Unified continues to make [vaccination and testing options available](#) for all our students and families. We encourage every family to take advantage of these opportunities to protect yourselves from the spread of the Omicron variant.

Thank you for your continued support throughout these challenging times. This is not the return to normal that many of us were hoping for at the start of the school year, but we have effective planning in place, a strong team to implement those plans, and the full support of our beloved community. Together, we will get through this latest challenge and ensure our students have the school experience they deserve.

Sincerely,
San Diego Unified School District

San Diego Unified School District would like to continue connecting with you via email. If you prefer to be removed from our list and stop receiving all email messages distributed through SchoolMessenger, follow this link and confirm: [Unsubscribe](#). Please note that if you unsubscribe, you will no longer receive emails from your child's school.