



December 11, 2020

Dear Lexington Two Students, Families, and Staff:

Parents at several Lexington Two schools have been contacted this week, to learn that their student's classroom -- or, in the case of Wood Elementary, the whole school -- would temporarily move to virtual instruction until winter break, as a result of meeting the district's 10% metric.

This 10% rule has resulted in concerns and, in some cases, misinformation in the community that students are moving from face-to-face to virtual because the classroom and/or school "is full of positive COVID-19 cases" that are not being reported.

First, it's important to understand this: **The accurate reporting of positive COVID-19 cases, close contacts and quarantines is a legal requirement** -- one that we take quite seriously and follow to the letter of the law.

The issue, we believe, is in the 10% metric.

Back in October, the Board of Trustees wished to have, and approved, a metric that would provide some sort of structure, or expectation, for school closure upon returning face-to-face. That metric is the 10% rule -- that when 10% of students in a classroom or building have tested positive and/or are quarantined not necessarily as a positive but a close contact, those students will move to virtual instruction temporarily. There is a distinction between positive and quarantined:

- A **positive case** is when an individual has received a confirmed positive COVID-19 test result certified through DHEC guidelines. That person is required to be excluded from school for a recommended period of time. **An active positive case does not mean that someone contracted the virus at school. As of the morning of December 11, there were 31 active positive students.**
- **Quarantined** means someone has been identified by a COVID positive individual as a close contact per CDC/DHEC guidelines. **If someone is quarantined, it does not mean the individual is a positive COVID-19 case, nor does it mean**

they were exposed to a positive case at the school. However, quarantine does allow exposed individuals to be separated from others, restricted in movement, to see whether that person becomes sick with COVID-19. **As of the morning of December 11, of the roughly 544 students who have been in quarantine across the district at some point since the start of the 2020-21 school year, only 7 have actually turned out to be positive for COVID-19. That's out of nearly 8,500 students.**

The 10% metric has created complications, particularly in the high school system. For example, you could have two (2) students quarantined from Class A be in multiple classes and bringing those classes to 10% -- meaning they should be virtual. This also means students who are two to three times removed from the primary case are now virtual as well. The end result we are seeing play out at one particular high school is following the 10% rule with fidelity, which has caused confusion and frustration with parents. This is especially true for parents of children who do not need to be quarantined and now do not have an in-person class running as a result of the 10% rule being put into effect.

Please know the district is continuing to collect and report data while also evaluating next steps for its metric.

Another component in determining whether to close a school is related to staffing. We at Lexington Two look forward to providing a safe and meaningful learning opportunity for all of our students, especially when we are adequately staffed to do so. There has been a lot of communication from parents and community members about the availability, attendance, and current health of our staff. When a staff member reports an absence for general illness or a personal matter, the district takes their word.

If a staff member has either tested positive for COVID-19 or is a close contact as defined by CDC/DHEC, they are not expected to report to work. If they have tested positive or have been exposed as a close contact as defined by CDC/DHEC, they are required to report it to their school and district.

Students and parents have communicated concerns about their classroom moving to virtual learning and receiving little, or any, communications, lessons, and/or assignments from the teacher(s). If this is happening, please communicate this with the building principal to have this resolved.

Please expect to hear more updates from us next week.