

Dear D38 staff, families and friends,

District leadership approached this year with goals tied to our strategic plan. These include serving every student, every day; keeping our schools safe and open; and staying vigilant while communicating with our community. Despite approaching these goals during an uncertain time, each remains front and center as we continue to stay attuned to the evolving situation in our community and schools.

Given the current rise of COVID-19 cases in our county, state and beyond, it is also not surprising that we have experienced multiple cases within our schools. D38 has continued to follow its protocols, and notify families potentially impacted by positive COVID cases within our schools. I wanted to take time to address questions of if we will change our protocols, but also update you on the status of COVID-19 within our schools.

To date, we have experienced no more than 40 reported COVID-19 cases within a district of greater than 7,000 individuals (staff and students). Among those cases are two recent health-department recognized "outbreaks," which are defined as five or more connected cases within a certain timeframe. Those outbreaks, at Lewis-Palmer Elementary School and Prairie Winds Elementary School, are both contained to a single grade level, and are currently limited to seven and six confirmed cases respectively.

Our response to each outbreak has been swift and measured. Please note, when dealing with similar situations, we may have to implement temporary, cohorted remote learning if one grade or class experiences a significant number of COVID-19 cases in the future. We will apply this measure on a case-by-case basis.

Given our main goal is to preserve as much in-person learning as possible, we understand the concern over cases in our schools, and want to applaud our community for working together for the best possible outcome. We value everyone doing their part in keeping sick students home, advocating for our students and adhering to current protocols.

On behalf of district leadership, our team acknowledges that some in our community believe our current protocols are sufficient, while others believe they could be enhanced. We understand the divisive nature of face coverings, and want to touch on the topic. We do not seek to make masking a political issue. However, we believe removing personal choice from the equation at this time would certainly do so, especially when neither state officials, nor El Paso County Public Health have issued a mask mandate.

District leadership also remains open to the possibility of implementing mask usage at a greater level, especially if the positions of our state or local health officials shift. Moreover, it is important to remind our community that masks are still universally recommended as both an El Paso County Public Health and D38 COVID mitigation strategy.

I know how hard this situation can be on our staff, students, and our families, and I want to both say thank you and reflect on the good things happening within our schools. No day goes by without a story or note filtering to a member of our district leadership team representing one of the many positives of in-school learning and the benefits of our current protocols.

We would like to say thank you, and commit to continuing our open channels of communication with you as we continue to navigate the 2021-2022 school year.

Best regards,  
KC Somers, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Lewis-Palmer School District 38