



January 3, 2021

Dear LRSD Family,

I hope that you had a restful, healthy, and safe Winter Break. I am looking forward to our students, teachers, and staff returning this week.

LRSD has been very proactive over the COVID span, providing PPE – including masks, testing for staff, ventilation systems, and vaccine clinics. However, with the rampant spread of the Omicron variant, we must remain vigilant. We are planning a full return to in-person learning and as we head into the New Year, we are monitoring the Omicron variant closely, as well as its effect on COVID data in our community. We are in close contact with the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and our district health team.

I recognize that the surge from the newest variant is causing unease and fear in many people. Please know that we are listening to the advice of the public health experts in our community and will follow their guidance. To enhance our transparency on COVID cases, we will restart a daily delivery on impacted students and staff who have tested positive or need quarantine

As we prepare to return to our classrooms this week, here are some helpful resources and information for our families and staff to know.

### **Updated COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance**

[Isolation/Quarantine Information](#) – ADH

### **COVID Tests**

If you are having [symptoms of COVID-19](#), you are strongly encouraged to take a COVID test. While the at-home test kits are in short supply in our area, there are providers who are administering PCR tests. Check with ADH for a list of providers. Meanwhile, LRSD will continue to provide onsite, voluntary testing for school-based staff who have no symptoms.

If you are an LRSD employee or a parent of a student who has tested positive or has had a confirmed community exposure, here's how to report an exposure or positive case to LRSD:

If you are a parent of a student -

Keep your student home and contact your child's school

If you are an employee -

Stay home and notify your building administration

**Please note: a positive test result should always be reported to your healthcare provider as well.**

## **Vaccines**

Our best defense against COVID-19 is the safe and effective vaccines that are widely available. I encourage everyone in our LRSD community to get vaccinated. And if you are already vaccinated, be sure to also get your booster shot! This is also the flu season, if you have not received your flu vaccine, it is highly recommended that you do so.

For a list of locations providing the COVID-19 vaccine to ages 5 years and older, [click on this link](#).

As we continue to host onsite COVID vaccine clinics at LRSD for eligible students, details will be announced with dates shared on [lrsd.org](http://lrsd.org).

## **Mask Up**

We continue to require all students, staff, and visitors to wear a mask indoors at all LRSD buildings. For the greatest effectiveness against the airborne virus, it is important to always wear a mask properly so that it covers your mouth and nose. LRSD has received new masks that meet expectations of the ADH from Arkansas Department of Education. These masks will be available at each site, but parents are also welcome to provide masks for their own students.

## **Preparing for a Shift to Remote Learning**

Daily, we see stories from across the nation and even in our state where school districts have made a shift to remote learning due to staff shortages, and we know that it is a possibility for LRSD. If we see a shortage of teachers or substitutes to cover classes or a shortage of bus drivers to safely transport students, we will make the temporary shift to remote learning for the affected schools.

While we would make every effort to notify staff and families ahead of time as soon as possible, these shifts can happen abruptly. I encourage all students, teachers, and staff to take their devices and technology home with them every night and have a plan for how you would adjust to remote learning. Fortunately, we lived through virtual delivery throughout the past year, and staff, students, and parents all understand the critical role to ensure student engagement. It takes all of us working together to maintain student engagement when shifts occur. If your child is struggling in the virtual, setting, contact your principal for support.

We hope that it does not come to this for any of our schools, but we are planning just in case.

## **Staff Absence Reporting**

Our preparations depend on having a clear understanding of our staffing levels on school days. If you are a staff member who is feeling ill, I encourage you to notify your supervisor or submit your absence request as soon as possible. The earlier we know about absences, the better we can prepare and serve our students. Equally important, if you don't feel well, don't attend school; you should get tested and contact your medical provider for support.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to starting the New Year strong and seeing our students and staff back in the classroom on this week.

Sincerely,



Michael Alan Poore  
Superintendent of Schools