

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Bandera ISD reports spike in Covid positive case numbers

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Reporting the highest Covid positive numbers to date, Bandera ISD Superintendent Dr. Jerry Hollingsworth is asking for families' help while he closely monitors the district's next steps.

"Right after Christmas, we were sitting at 12 to 15 cases," Hollingsworth said in a Facebook Live video this afternoon. "We've seen those numbers spike."

Currently, BISD has 40 positive cases, and 247 people quarantined.

Hollingsworth said the number of people quarantined does not necessarily indicate positive cases, but there is a good chance each was exposed to someone who did test positive.

Broken down, Bandera High School has 32 cases; Alkek Elementary has five cases; and Bandera Middle School has three cases. At Alkek, two full classes - one headstart pre-k and one third-grade class - are quarantined. The district does not identify whether someone who tests positive is a student or staff member.

Hollingsworth said all of the students have access to online classes from home.

"We make sure they have access, and send hot spots home if they don't have good internet access," Hollingsworth said. "We're doing everything we can to help keep instruction rolling anytime a student is placed in that position."

Dr. Kenneth Vogel, Bandera High School principal, said some extracurricular activities have been cancelled, but academic and athletic staff are doing everything they can to keep schedules active. Both basketball and soccer games are set for tonight.

“The light is coming sooner than later,” Vogel said, adding he expects the majority of staff and students to return by Monday.

Vogel said the overwhelming majority of the BHS team agrees that on-campus instruction is best for the students. On campus safety protocols are strictly followed, including mask-wearing, social distancing and one-way halls.

“We want to do the best that we can to service students in person, for as long as we can,” Vogel said.

Hollingsworth cautioned that the state gives school districts the authority to convert to virtual learning if and when needed.

“If tomorrow and the next day we had an increase in the number of staff who are positive and we had to quarantine a whole bunch more folks, we’re about at that point where we might have to make that transition,” Hollingsworth said. “If our numbers hold where they are and we begin to get our teachers back as we expect...and get our students back on campus...then we feel like we’ve kind of come through what we hope has been the worst part of what we’ve experienced thus far.”

Hollingsworth asked parents and caregivers to help at home with temperature screenings and limiting students’ exposures.

“If you divide a kid’s life into thirds, about a third of it hopefully they’re asleep, a third of it they’re with us, the other third they’re with you,” Hollingsworth said. “Any way that you can help us, in terms of minimizing contact with big gatherings until we get through the worst of this, that’s certainly appreciated and certainly helpful.”