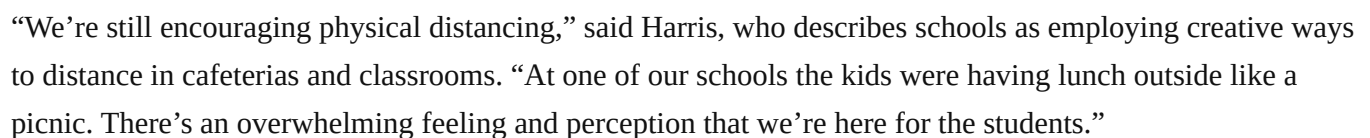


September 3, 2021



In terms of protocol, Harris reports few things have changed. Students are still sanitizing their hands and wearing masks. If someone has symptoms and winds up positive, they have to quarantine for 14 days. Those in contact with that person have to be tested twice per week for two weeks to determine if they are positive. Under California law, staff must be vaccinated or test negative. That goes into effect October 15, and the school district is hiring two nurses to administer the tests. For students, parental consent is necessary.

At Margaret Keeting Elementary on the Yurok Tribal Lands, Principal Christian Stromberg describes the first week back as “The happiest starts of a school year.”

Of the 100 students enrolled, 90 are back in the classroom for full-time, in-person learning and Stromberg said it’s an easy environment because the students and parents are very positive.

“The kids don’t have resistance to wearing masks. They’ve been trained at home to take this seriously, so we have a great atmosphere here. The Klamath community takes care of each other,” he said.

Last year, Keeting was in hybrid mode where students attended half the time. This year everyone was back, and Stromberg described it as a joyful experience.

“We remodeled our library, all our teachers came back and we’re on fire here. It’s super positive,” he said.

And for parent Kathleen Van Gordon, testing at school is an effective tool.

“Good! That will be much better than having to wait in line to get tested at one of the testing sites or trying to get in to see a doctor. Will definitely be a time saver,” she said.

Other parents comment on the district’s Facebook page that they prefer to have their child tested outside of school. Harris reiterates that testing is a matter of parental consent.

Sending kids to in person school is also a matter of consent. All 12 schools in the district offer independent study programs. The classes vary from last year in that there are fewer real time class sessions and students are doing more of their work at their own pace. But for concerned parents or for those students who do better in an independent environment, it’s available. Of the 3,600 students enrolled in the district, only 225 have opted for independent study as opposed to in person learning.

“If it works for them, that’s great.” said Harris but he cautions for those who didn’t do well in last year’s learning environment, this year is likely to be less supervised and therefore for those students who want more direct teacher time, in person classes would be better.

The bottom line said Harris is that few things have changed in terms of how COVID is being handled.

“Students are still sanitizing. Everyone is still wearing masks and if anyone is symptomatic we ask that they stay home,” he said.

He also urges people to get information directly from the school district website, www.dnUSD.org, to keep things running smoothly.

“Last year we heard rumors and cases blown out of proportion. We want to be as transparent as possible throughout this,” Harris stated.