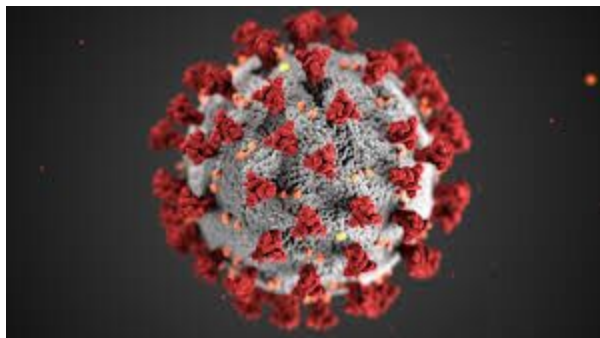


Two students test positive for COVID-19; health officer authorizes campuses to remain open

October 8, 2020



Two Del Norte Unified School District students have tested positive for COVID-19 according to district and public health officials.

In a letter to the public Thursday, Oct. 8, Superintendent Jeff Harris and county Public Health Officer Warren Rehwaldt, confirmed the two students — one at Crescent Elk Middle School and the other from Smith River School — did not contract the coronavirus at their schools.

The two students were both in the Monday/Wednesday cohorts.

“In both cases, we had been previously notified of close contacts, and the two students were quarantined at that time to avoid any further exposure to other students or staff,” the letter read.

At this time, no school closures are recommended. According to Harris and Rehwaldt’s letter, individual school closure is recommended based on the number of cases, the percentage of the teacher/students/staff that are positive for COVID-19 and in consultation with county Public Health department.

“Individual school closure may be appropriate when there are multiple cases in multiple cohorts at a school or when at least 5 percent of the total number of teachers/student/staff are cases within a 14-day period, depending on the size and physical layout of the school,” they wrote.

With the confirmed positive cases, the DNUSD is taking the following steps immediately:

- Del Norte County’s Public Health Office, with cooperation of DNSUD, will begin contact tracing.
- All affected students and staff, in the two cohorts only, will be placed on quarantine for 14 calendar days. Schools will notify those families regarding how to access school by distance learning.

— DNUSD will work with the schools to clean and disinfect the classrooms, per California Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines, and in accordance with the District Epidemic/Pandemic Safety Plan.

— Based on the results of public health’s contact tracing, any other students or staff who were in close contact with the positive cases may be quarantined.

— COVID-19 testing will most likely be recommended for all quarantined students and staff, and they should contact their local healthcare provider or follow directions from Public Health when contacted.

“Public Health and the District have been and will continue to work closely together to help our schools and community remain healthy and safe,” the letter states. “Please remember that this is why our schools are implementing cohorts and why the wearing of face coverings, physical distancing and hand washing or sanitizing are so important.”

Rehwaldt reiterated and Harris emphasized, DNUSD will not be able to stop the virus nor ensure that no one contracts it, “but can minimize exposure, slow the spread and continue to take a slow, methodical and thoughtful approach to students returning to school.”

This is a developing story check back for updates on the situation as we learn more at triplicate.com.