



Preparing every student to thrive in a global society.

Dear East Side Community,

This is to update my January 9 communication to you about the District's efforts to keep our schools and programs open and safe for our students and staff.

As of today, the confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in the District's high schools for the last ten days (January 2 – 12) is 90 reported confirmed positive cases among District staff (4.15% of all staff) and 1,093 reported confirmed positive cases among District students (4.96% of all students). While there has been an increase in cases in the last 4 days, that increase is still less than that being experienced in other areas. (The District's dashboard with current data, including totals for the Adult Education Program, is updated daily and is on the District website at: <https://www.esuhd.org/Community/COVID-Dashboards/index.html>.)

There have been widespread media reports about some bay area school districts reverting to remote on-line learning in response to the current surge in cases. Those districts had to reverse course and return to in-person instruction. Districts that refuse to implement in-person instruction risk losing millions of dollars in funding for important programs to serve their communities.

The state does not currently allow for a public school to provide only remote learning. Although some students and their families may choose an independent studies program (ESUHSU offers such a program), **all** students must be given the opportunity to learn in-person. East Side honors that commitment not just because the state says that is what we must do, but also because we know that our schools and classrooms and programs are vital the physical and mental health and social and emotional well-being of the thousands of students we serve. Our students count on us every day to provide a safe and welcoming place to learn. For many, our schools are also a place for healthy and hot meals. I am grateful for the dedication and commitment of our District teachers and staff to show up every day to honor that commitment and serve our students.

Following the guidance of the County Public Health Officer and the County Superintendent of Schools, the District has implemented multiple layers of risk-mitigation strategies to limit the virus' spread on our sites and in our classrooms. Here are some important points to remember as we all work together to manage and stay safe during this latest surge.

- **Free and accessible PPE:** All students and employees and anyone else on a school site must wear a properly fitted mask each day covering both mouth and nose. All our schools have a stock of free masks for any student who needs one or who needs a replacement. If a student or employee would like to double-mask, we will provide an extra mask for that, too, for free. Our school sites are also stocked with hand sanitizer.
- **Timely Communication Regarding Exposures:** The District expresses its gratitude for those students and families who have reported the positive COVID-19 test results. The District continues to provide timely exposure notifications so that you can remain informed and so that you can make positive choices for your student and/or yourself.
- **Ventilation:** The ventilation filtration systems in all of the District's schools, classrooms and facilities have been upgraded to meet public health recommendations and OSHA safety standards.

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- **Testing:** The District distributed more than 22,000 home antigen rapid tests to students last week. (Each test pack has two tests in it) The District has only a limited supply of COVID-19 rapid tests for students and staff returning to school/work after testing positive. In addition, the District has a testing policy in place for employees. Santa Clara County continues to offer free testing. You can schedule an appointment for a free COVID-19 test through the following link: <https://covid19.sccgov.org/covid-19-testing>. As is being reported, there is a limited supply of tests available locally and statewide, including take-home rapid antigen tests. Federal and state government officials have announced that large quantities of rapid tests are being purchased for general distribution. The District continues to monitor the widespread availability of those tests and, as recently done, will be available to assist in the distribution of those test kits once available.
- **Vaccination:** The District continues with its vaccination and testing policy for all employees. We continue to encourage vaccination and boosters for all students and community members who are eligible. Full vaccination has been shown to prevent serious disease and hospitalization from COVID-19.

The District administrative team and I are in regular communication with employee representatives to address staffing issues and to address concerns about safety issues. Earlier this week, Governor Gavin Newsom called for new legislation to revive supplemental paid sick leave policies for workers required to stay home from work due to COVID-19 issues. We are monitoring these legislative developments very closely.

Thank you for your continued efforts and support. The District's leadership team and I continue to monitor the public health and safety conditions closely, and we will consider every option and action needed to keep our students, staff and community safe.

In Community,



Glenn Vander Zee
Superintendent