

Clinton Public School District update for October

By Dr. Andy Schoggin, CPSD Superintendent of Schools



As we are in the final week of our first term, I want to thank our community, families, students and teachers for their hard work and commitment to excellence. Personally, one of the best parts of my first few months in the Clinton community has been getting to know so many members of our school community and to build connections with those individuals.

I've had the chance to see firsthand the exceptionally talented educators and the difference they can truly make when they have students consistently present inside the classroom. Because of our high attendance rate, I've also had the chance to see engaged students continue to grow academically and socially.

Last year, our data indicated that each positive student was responsible for quarantining an average of 7 students due to contact tracing. For perspective, we have had 135 positive students in our district since the beginning of the year.

Using that same information, following the close contact guidelines while wearing masks has potentially benefitted 945 students from being quarantined from school for a minimum of 10 days. By following the current guidelines that define close contact, we are able to exclude otherwise healthy students from a 10-day quarantine if both the infected student and the exposed students consistently wear masks the entire time.

This year, we have had to quarantine a total of 7 students since the beginning of school due to close contact inside a school setting. All others are a result of in-home contact or other outside of school contact.

Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that we have experienced zero outbreaks among any individual classes, groups, or activities. This means that we have had zero class level quarantines, zero building level closures, and our activities and sports have missed zero practices or competitions due to an outbreak within their team or sport. This has been our goal all along—to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the ability of our students to attend school in-person and participate in academics and activities without interruptions.

We have been closely monitoring the downward trajectory of COVID-related illnesses in our area. Some key data points beyond the minimization of student

quarantines and student attendance are the percent-positive rate for Hinds County and the rate of cases per 100,000 as compared to the Clinton Public School District.

The percent-positive is exactly what it sounds like - the percentage of all coronavirus tests performed that are actually positive. A high percent positive suggests that it is not a good time to relax protocols aimed at reducing transmission among our students and staff. As a reminder, when the reopening protocols for the CPSD were created in May 2021, the percent positive for Hinds County was 2.4%. Currently, the rate is almost 5x higher than that at over 11%. While the trajectory has steadily trended downward, this indicator gives cause for concern for our community.

Additionally, although Hinds county has also incrementally decreased the rate of cases per 100,000 over each two week period, our county is still considered as a "high case county." As compared to CPSD, the rate of decrease has accelerated more rapidly than with our student body over the same two-week period. Several reasons may be attributed to the difference. While the CPSD rate per 100,000 has also declined steadily, it is important to balance that with the understanding that the age distribution of recent COVID cases has increased among children. Also, within our student population, 51% are not of age to be eligible for vaccinations.

Recently, test data from the 2020-2021 school year was released. Although our district was again among the highest performing in many categories, skill deficiencies among many students in a multitude of areas were also identified. It is abundantly clear that our students learn best when connected, in person, to their school and teachers. Each day we have with our students inside our classrooms, our teachers are working to address those needs.

At present, we will continue to follow all protocols as outlined in our Reopening Plan. As data continues to trend downward, we will reduce the timelines for review of our protocols from monthly to every two-week period.

This will continue to be a year where we navigate the changing landscape each day. Regardless, one thing will remain certain - we remain steadfast about the success of our students. Thank you for the patience and grace that you continue to afford us during this challenging time.

As always—Go Arrows!

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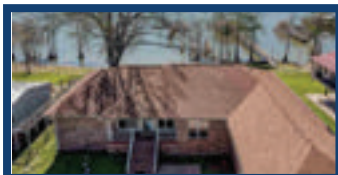
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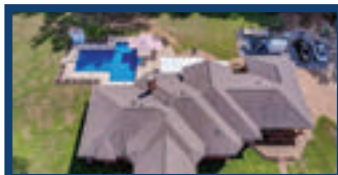
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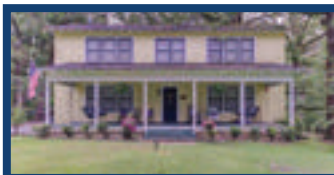
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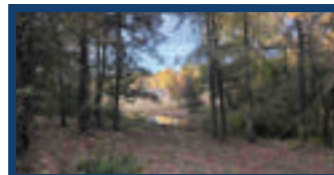
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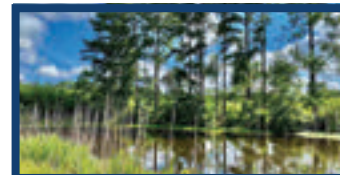
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