



January 2, 2022

Dear EPS Families,

We hope you enjoyed winter break and were able to spend quality time with friends and loved ones.

As we prepare to begin a new semester, we do so amid a spike in Covid-19 cases fueled by the fast-moving Omicron variant. While public health officials say this variant is less severe than the Delta variant, experts at the Oklahoma City County Health Department (OCCHD) tell us to prepare for the spike to continue for at least two or more weeks following our return to school.

While it's difficult to say how the spike will evolve, each one of us needs to stay vigilant with our own health and safety practices to avoid potential school disruptions which could include staffing shortages. Please keep your children home if they are sick. For your convenience, our testing hub at Cross Timbers Elementary (4800 N. Kelly Avenue, Edmond, 73025) will be open from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. The hub can test for Covid, Flu, and Strep, and is for any student or their family members. All persons visiting the hub should have ID and proof of insurance.

### **CDC ISSUES NEW ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE GUIDANCE**

As you are likely aware, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently released updated guidance related to isolation and quarantine for COVID-19.

#### **Isolation**

Moving forward, the isolation period for anyone that tests positive for coronavirus will be 5 days from symptom onset or 5 days from the positive test date if no symptoms are present. Individuals can return on or after day 6 if they are asymptomatic or symptoms are beginning to resolve. In addition, an individual must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication before returning.

**Quarantine**

The CDC quarantine period was also shortened to 5 days from the date of exposure with testing encouraged on day 5. While EPS recommends quarantine following exposure, it is not required. It is your personal responsibility to determine if quarantine is warranted following exposure to Covid-19.

**Masks**

As a reminder, beginning January 3, masks will be recommended instead of required. Please be aware that the OCCHD and the CDC strongly recommend the use of a mask for the five days following a period of Covid-19 isolation. Please continue to wear masks as you personally desire.

Moving forward, the district will continue to work closely with state and local health officials in an effort to keep students and staff safe and healthy. Further adjustments to our coronavirus and mask procedures may occur in the future if needed.

Despite the ongoing challenges presented by Covid-19, we are looking forward to a very positive and productive year serving our students and families.

Angela Grunewald  
Superintendent