

11/17/2020

Dear Nooksack Valley:

As you are now all aware, we have experienced our first positive case of COVID. I am so very proud of all of our schools and homes for following and enforcing our protocols and structures. Because of this, only one classroom and one staff are quarantined. I am also thankful for our school nurses for their tireless work over the weekend making sure we were aligned with the Department of Health, contacting parents, communicating with staff, etc.

At the same time, our state and nation are experiencing a new "surge" of COVID cases. Our Governor has announced a return to some of the restrictions that were put in place earlier. Some believe that these restrictions are a good thing. Some believe they are not. My hope, regardless of beliefs about this, is that everyone can connect the dots to following the guidelines and our ability to provide in person learning for our children.

We have also been in close and constant communication with the county Health Department. They are preparing a written statement that is intended to be distributed later this week. What they verbalized last night was that a) while COVID cases are on the rise, they are not attributing that to schools and in person learning, b) we should continue with our current models for in person learning, and c) we should not expand in person learning over the next month. They also said that they are expecting an updated "Decision Tree" that will show an adjustment of the "moderate range" of 25-75 new cases in a two week period per 100,000 population, to a top end of 200 for the moderate range. This is based on the research indicating that schools are not contributing to the spike in overall community cases.

On a personal note, I am challenged to my very core to find our pathway forward. My entire career has been spent trying to do what is best for our children and attempting to help our great staff to be successful in accomplishing that mission. I want them all safe AND I want our children to thrive. When they are with our staff, they thrive. This journey we are on together is not perfect, nor will it be. I am just so grateful that I'm on this journey with all of you!

With Love and Appreciation,

Mark

Note: We had a COVID distraction over the weekend with the birth of our first granddaughter. I highly recommend that we all continue to find ongoing and healthy "distractions" during this time. In the meantime, my grandsons are LOVING being in school, with great staff and friends.