

Lowell Joint SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Home of Scholars and Champions”



Healthy Families and Staff Newsletter (Update #23)

Lowell Joint **STRONG**

December 17, 2020



Our world seems to be even crazier than ever before and everything now changes every 2-4 hours instead of just every 2-4 days. There is so much information, perception, rumors and conflicting information that we each have to keep reminding ourselves to stop and breathe; truly. We are truly blessed to have such wonderful Lowell Joint families; you are **AWESOME**. We continue to stand in faith as we are **LOWELL JOINT STRONG** and we will stand strong against the storms that come our way; you are the beacon/lighthouse of educational excellence; **THANK YOU!**

I truly know that folks can be frustrated and anxious through all of these stormy times. We want to give the Lowell Joint Family some updates, but please know that these are cliff-note versions of a multifaceted/ever changing world:

- The LA County Public Health Department updated tracking numbers are:
 - Spread/case rate: Current data is 26.9/100K. Last week it was 20.2. (#/100K citizens- target is <7/100K)
 - Test positivity percentage: Current data is 8.7%. Last week it was 7.0%. (target is <8%)
 - Health Equity: Current data is 13.9%. Last week it was not available. (accounting for high poverty aspects; no real target established)
- The Orange County Public Health Department updated tracking numbers are:
 - Spread/case rate: Current data is 30.3/100K. Last week it was 22.2. (#/100K citizens- target is <7/100K)
 - Test positivity percentage: Current data is 10.6%. Last week it was 8.8%. (target is <8%)
 - Health Equity: Current data is 16.2%. Last week was not available. (accounting for high poverty aspects; no real target established)
- The Governor and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) are issuing new orders every couple of days; here is the very short version as it affects schools:
 - 1) Currently, if a school is open, then it can stay open,
 - 2) Currently, if a school is not open yet, then it will stay closed,
 - 3) The infection rate increases are not coming from school settings, but from group gatherings away from schools. In fact, they are not school related, but from activities off school campuses.
 - 4) The State/County “Safer at Home” order does not apply to essential activities or facilities.
- The most current data is located on the State COVID19 webpage ([State Link](#)). National data summary from John Hopkins: [John Hopkins COVID Resource Center](#). Governor’s blueprint: COVID19.CA.GOV or [California Department of Public Health](#).
- All current public health orders impose restrictions on businesses and various activities, it **does not** affect schools as confirmed by Orange County Health Care Agency Officer Dr. Clayton Chau. The Governor’s office clarified that this includes schools with or without a waiver. Specifically the Governor stated that schools should remain open with the necessary precautions in place. In alignment with the Governor’s order and with guidance from the [California Department of Public Health](#) and the [Orange County Health Care Agency](#).
- There have been some questions related to LJSD; therefore, please allow me to share a few brief details:
 - LJSD has had **very few** staff or students (a total of 6) that have notified us that they have tested positive. This is from August 10th, 2020 until now.
 - Each situation is reported directly to our district nurse and she immediately completes the contact tracing protocol to determine: 1) if the situation is epidemiologically linked to LJSD or if the infection was from off campus, 2) who/if anyone was in “close contact” and she speaks personally with each person, 3) coordinates with HR to make sure we maintain the highest level of confidentiality and we do not violate any HIPPA laws. Please recall that “close contact” means: 1) closer than 6 feet, 2) for longer than 15 minutes, 3) over a 24-hour period.
 - We are pleased to share that all health department protocols have been followed and at this point:

- No situations have been epidemiologically linked to LJSD nor to each other; each person contracted the illness from activities off campus.
- If there was a person that was a “close contact”, they have been spoken with directly by our district nurse and they have not been affected.
- If anyone was a “close contact”, they have quarantined or isolated in compliance with the State and County orders and are fine. Again, we absolutely maintain legal confidentiality for each staff/student and comply with HIPPA laws.
- We have had a number of folks (staff, parents, students) that thought they might have been exposed and each time those folks are also interviewed by our district nurse to determine the actual details of the situation and then given the appropriate next step directions.
- Please know that we all understand the frustration some folks may feel and the desire to know more, but we absolutely must maintain legal confidentiality and follow HIPPA laws. No one would ever seek to harm any of our Lowell Joint Family.
- There is also good news coming out related to the upcoming availability of a voluntary vaccine within this week and then expanding out through January and February.
- Considering the hundreds of moving parts and data points we had anticipated a phased reopening plan for late January (Jan 25th), **BUT** everyone must understand that this too can change and probably **will** change based on the ever changing directives from the Governor and the County Public Health Department. We will continue to update the Lowell Joint Family regularly, because we want you to have as much accurate and concrete information as possible.
- **Please, please, please** know that during these times everything really does change and adjust every 2-4 days. Thank you for your patience, mercy, and grace.
- You are **GREATLY APPRECIATED, GREATLY VALUED AND GREATLY LOVED!**

Keeping the Lowell Joint Family Informed and Connected...

I know that this whole crazy world is more than frustrating, scary, confusing, and overwhelming at times. Speaking for me personally, there really is not a day that goes by that I don't need a little time to hit my knees and then I get back up and put on my “big boy pants” - cowboy-up and know that we will exceed in spite of these storms. Lowell Joint is truly a very special place and we will withstand these storms and come out strong on the other side.

Your continued strength, compassion, care, resilience, GRIT, and heart are an incredible testimony to the shared dedication and commitment of our students, staff, parents, and community. Yes, this is the same thing we say each time, but it is so true and I will keep reminding you...

THANK YOU – YOU ARE A BLESSING!

LOWELL JOINT STRONG!!

*A littler laughter helps bring joy....
Bad cowboy humor....*

No this is not a family picture, but it could have been....

