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District, health department work in tandem to determine who needs to quarantine
Despite rumors, county did not request entire grade level be sent home, did not threaten legal action

District, health department work in tandem to determine who needs to quarantine

Despite rumors, county did not request entire grade level be sent home, did not threaten legal action

BY DAVID TIMMERMAN
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In the past week, the number of individuals with positive active COVID cases within the Lancaster Community School District has increased from three last Thursday to 16 as of the end of the day Tuesday. Due to that increase, which has led to dozens of students sent home to quarantine with close contact, there has been a severe disruption to the education many students are receiving.

The school board scheduled a special meeting Wednesday evening in which they will look at masking issues moving forward.

As the number of individuals testing positive increases, and as the number of people being sent home because

of those increases reaches a critical mass, speculation and rumors have circulated in the community as to the decisions of who goes home, with one theme being that the Grant County Health Department is being heavy handed on the responses, even threatening legal action against the school if they do not comply.

Several parents have written letters to both the school board, and to supervisors of the Grant County Board reiterating this rumor.

Is it true, however? The two

The Lancaster Community School Board will have met Wednesday to further discuss mask options due to a jump in positive cases within the district. Turn to SWNews4U.com Wednesday evening for a wrap-up of their discussion, including any outcome passed.



Monday, discussing how his department and the school district handled different exposure incidents last week.

In total, two different classrooms on two different grade levels were quarantined last week for different exposures.

For one grade, the rumor was Kindrai looked to send home the entire grade level, including several classrooms due to a shared outdoor recess.

"I asked their staff to identify only the known close contacts from recess

based on their observations," Kindrai continued, noting that the different classrooms shared a recess. "They helped and we were in all in agreement as far as I know."

"I did talk to Mr. Kindrai about the close contacts (the Grant County Health Department) was initially looking to quarantine," District Administrator Rob Wagner added. "We ultimately sent home one classroom each of two different grade levels, similar to what occurred last school year."

"He did not threaten to sue the district at any point," Wagner continued, refuting the rumor about Kindrai.

Hay wagon collision kills motorist

A 26-year-old Hazel Green man died after his car rear-ended a hay wagon pulled by a tractor on Wisconsin 129 east of Lancaster Saturday evening.

Tristin Legrand died at Grant Regional Health Center in Lancaster after the crash on 129 at Lincoln Road around 8:15 p.m.

According to the Grant County Sheriff's Office, Paul Adams, 63, Lancaster, was driving a tractor pulling a hay wagon loaded with several large square bales south on 129. Adams had stopped the tractor in the southbound lane while waiting for traffic to clear before he could turn east onto Lincoln Road when Legrand's car hit the rear of the hay wagon and became wedged underneath it.

Adams was not injured.

Lancaster Fire and EMS worked to extricate Legrand from the crash, the Sheriff's Office said. Lancaster Police and the Wisconsin State Patrol Crash Reconstruction Unit assisted at the scene.

Legrand was not wearing a seat belt, the Sheriff's Office said. Insufficient lighting is suspected as a possible factor in the crash, the Sheriff's Office said.

Legrand is the third fatality on Grant County roads this year, The crash is under investigation.

Continued COVID surge

BY STEVE PRESTEGARD
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After a couple of days being down, a new update of the numbers of new infections of COVID 19 in grant County has shown another surge.

There were 45 new confirmed cases over two days, leading to an increase of

Surge | SEE 3A

BRINGING WARMTH TO VETS



This past Thursday, veterans from Lancaster's area veteran organizations distributed lap quilts made by Eileen Blum and Diane Drew who live at Lancaster Health Services and Morningside Assisted Living. The two women made numerous colorful blankets, with another delivery set for later this fall to Orchard Manor. Go to SWNews4U.com later this week for video of the deliveries, while next week there will be a spotlight of the work.

Library, city see progress on dealing with project debt

With goal set, fundraising can move forward
BY DAVID TIMMERMAN
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Progress was made as the Schreiner Memorial Library Board Library Foundation, and Lancaster Common Council came up with goals on what the two groups can do to assist in raising the final amount of money for the 2015 expansion project.

After the discussion attempted to break down into minutia of just what the city expected the foundation and library board should cover, a member of the council and the library broke through to just define the goal.

Library Board President Dan Glass spoke up during the meeting, stating that when looking at the amount the two library groups should attempt to raise on the \$3.6 million project, he wanted to make it simple - \$50,000 annually for the next 14 years, raising a total of \$700,000.

"That is our goal - that is what we want to accomplish," Glass stated to the joint meeting of the library board and council last Wednesday night.

Setting a goal was important to Glass, putting a number "in stone," as then the board and foundation could plan for raising that, as well as coming up with other funds to cover new projects at the library.

Since the issue of funding the library project was brought up this spring as part of Mayor David Varnam's move to replace two members of the library board, the exact amount of the outstanding debt that was expected to be covered by outside groups seemed to be in flux.

When the project was contemplated, the common council passed a resolution pledging for the city to pay for \$1 million on the project.

In that resolution, it had also set the foundation's amount at \$2.3 million.

A number of factors changed the ultimate price tag. For one, the bid for the project came in higher than expected. Then the city lost the grant and pushed the project ahead two years, adding to the debt left over.

Depending on whatever number

Library | SEE 3A



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GRANT REGIONAL COMMUNITY CLINIC



In July, members of the River Ridge FFA Chapter went to the State FFA Convention in Madison. As school officials, Superintendent Mr. Koenig along with Dean of Students Mr. Winkers, were recognized by WI FFA Treasurer Kendra Jentz for their support of the WI FFA Association and River Ridge FFA Chapter. Pictured above: Madeline Esser, Avery Morrow, Jessica Patterson, Adam Tesar, Mr. Wade Winkers, Mr. Clay Koenig, Carter Bausch, Samantha Stagman, Spencer Steiger, and Madelyn Thornton. LEFT - Avery Drew, was selected for the Wisconsin FFA State Choir. She had to fill out an application and audition to be selected for this honor. She sang at the State Convention in July and at the State Fair in August.

COVID in school

FROM PAGE 1A

Differing policies for those who have been vaccinated, and those who have not, along with ways to reduce the length of quarantine through testing have left some parents testy, as the complexity of the guidelines set forward by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

"It is complex but we follow state guidance," Kindrai continued. "If there are any gray areas we consult with the state and follow their recommendations."

Does a district have universal masking or not? Can the students maintain social distancing or not? Is there assigned seating or cohorting? Are classroom free flowing? Are there potential extracurricular exposures?

"The schools help us sort through much of this as each school is a little different," Kindrai said.

Isolation/quarantine guidelines

In Grant County, there is a varying scale of the number of days one needs to be out if testing positive or if exposed, if one has been vaccinated or have not, which can make it confusing, and has led to some parents feeling like

they are not getting told their options due to the layers.

For the Lancaster Community School District, the policy was reiterated this week to try and eliminate any confusion.

- Grant County recommends a 14-day quarantine period for those who have had close contact exposure with a positive case. That window begins on the last day of believed exposure.

- Shortening that quarantine to 10 days is allowed, provided that the individual remains asymptomatic and continues to report conditions for a 14-day span. They must also wear a mask through Day 14, and continue to social distance, and avoid crowds.

- Quarantine can be shortened to seven days if the person took a test on Day 6 or Day 7 that returns negative, and no COVID symptoms are detected.

- Those people who return before the 14-day window should maintain social distancing (three feet for students, six feet for adults).

That is the policy for those not fully vaccinated.

Close contact is considered a cumulative time of 15 minutes or more during any single day. For students masked, close contact is under three feet, whereas for unmasked, any distance less

than six feet is considered close contact.

For adults, any distance under six feet, masked or not masked, is considered close contact.

For those who are fully vaccinated, quarantine is not needed, provided the individual is asymptomatic, and continues to wear a mask during the 14-day period, and monitor condition.

Those who test positive, whether vaccinated or not, are suppose to isolate at home for 10 days from a positive test collection, or from showing symptoms.

Those not showing symptoms can go back to school after that. For those who had symptoms, they must be fever-free for 24 hours (without the aid of fever-reducing drugs) and have a reduction of symptoms.

Exposure estimates for close contacts help determine when the clock begins.

Kindrai gave the example of a child who is a little sick in school on Wednesday, let's say the third of a month, but no one notices and the child does not complain.

On Thursday the Fourth, the child is more ill and the parent keeps them home. On Friday (fifth) the child gets tested in the afternoon. The sample is shipped but gets to the lab Monday, the Eighth.

The lab was able to run the sample Monday night and the positive result was sent and received Tuesday (Ninth) in the morning by the health department.

Tuesday, the health department investigates and works with the school identifying close contacts. Since people are infectious two days before symptoms start some children were exposed on Monday (First) and that was their only exposure. Some children were exposed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, with Wednesday being their last date of exposure.

The ones only exposed on Monday, their first day of quarantine should have been the Tuesday (Second) but no one knew of the exposure until the Ninth, or eight days into the 14-day quarantine.

For those people, they could test and go back immediately if all requirements are met.

For the children with continued exposures through Wednesday, their first day of quarantine would have been Thursday the Fourth. Again, no one knew about the exposure until the Ninth, five days into the 14-day quarantine.

Under the guidelines being used by Lancaster Community Schools, they could get tested the next day, and return Day Seven if the test is negative, wearing a mask.

Then there are the caveats. What if the sick child at the center of this scenario has a sister that lives with him. The sick child recovers on the 14th day, and can return to school on Day 15. Under this scenario, the last day for exposure and the first day of quarantine for the sister would be the 14th.

Complicating matters are privacy laws that don't allow either the health department, nor the school to let families of those asked to quarantine to know what case it is referring to.

"I have had parents tell me you are wrong. My child was nowhere near Child X

on the First, and they very well could be right," Kindrai explained. "Unfortunately, Child X was not the source of the exposure, Child Y was, but I cannot tell them that."

Parents frustrated at differing policies for vaccinated, unvaccinated

Because of the complexity of the situation, and the fact that there are different ways to reduce the time home in quarantine, several parents are frustrated about their children's lost time from school.

Compounding that issue is the fact fully vaccinated students have a different policy, to the spread of misinformation about everything from the safety of masks, to the unknown of how much vaccinated people transmit the Delta variant of COVID-19.

On Friday, a select number of parents complained outside of Lancaster High School, unhappy that their children were sent home to quarantine while others, who are fully vaccinated, were allowed to remain in school.

An attempt was made to organize a protest on the Courthouse Square Monday, but in the end a total of five people showed up.

Those who showed had thought they had 15-20 people coming, but threatening clouds, as well as the belief they would be threatened for speaking out kept people away, those who showed surmised.

The Delta variant has muddied the waters a bit on how to combat COVID-19. While initial studies show it is not any more severe on its impact on individuals than previous variants, Delta has been seen as more transmittable.

In addition, initial studies of outbreaks indicated that vaccinated may shed as much of the virus as unvaccinated if infected, as opposed to previous variants when the vaccinated were seen as not shedding much virus at all.

Such a study, conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison submitted for

review on Aug. 24, found nearly the same levels of virus in vaccinated people as in unvaccinated people with the Delta variant.

That was matched by another study that had yet to be peer-reviewed from the University of Oxford.

Another study, also yet to be peer-reviewed, from the Netherlands, countered that what is being shed by vaccinated is an inert version of the virus, which would not infect, and overall, less virus is shed and for a shorter period of time from an infected vaccinated person than from an unvaccinated one.

The complexity of the options on quarantine also led to parents feeling the county health department was being heavy-handed.

Individual parents pointed to Lafayette County, which they felt had a more lenient quarantine period. In fact, Lafayette County has the same policy as Grant County, which is based off state recommendations.

The difference was messaging - Lafayette County emphasized that students could return to school after seven days with a negative test taken after the estimated incubation period, whereas Grant County defaulted to the 14-day quarantine, while bringing up the 10-day, and seven-day options.

Both Grant and Lafayette counties are based on the Wisconsin department of health Services recommendations, which are also part of the federal centers for Disease Control guidelines on how to handle 'close contact' persons.

Those out in stormy conditions Monday said they wanted a policy that didn't discriminate their children, exposing them to being unvaccinated, and kept them out of school. They wanted different policies on how those unvaccinated were handled, and wanted to see changes at the health department based on the rumor that it was attempting to force districts to be more strict on who needed to quarantine.

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