

Fremont County School District No. 21

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October 22, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardians:

At the August board meeting, the Fremont County School District #21 Board of Trustees voted to adhere to the Wind River Indian Reservation COVID-19 Public Health Order from the Wind River Inter-Tribal Council (WRITC). FCSD #21 adopted to follow the Public Health Order, Resolution No. 2021-11524, as a means to continue to provide in-person instruction for students.

The FCSD #21 Board of Trustees priority remains to be solely focused on students and providing a safe, nurturing learning environment with in-person learning opportunities. In order to provide the safest learning environment, the district is following CDC recommendations, the WRITC order, and Tribal Health recommendations. This would include the requirement of masking for students and staff on campus and buses, require weekly COVID-19 surveillance testing, daily symptom monitoring with temperature checks, social distancing measures, and limited transitions within the buildings. Consistent with the WRITC order, Fremont County School District #21 Board of Trustees adopted the requirement that all employees are required to be fully vaccinated. The district has provided adequate time for employees to comply with this term of employment.

At this time, the district has been reviewing medical and religious exemption requests regarding the COVID vaccination. Guidance from local, state, and national levels have been utilized for these processes. The district acknowledges that each individual has a choice to be vaccinated, that freedom of choice also comes with the inherent responsibility of accepting the outcome of that choice. These outcomes will ultimately affect individuals differently, as determined through the review process. The process to be fair for all parties involved has been long and arduous. Working from a non-political basis, and in spite of various threats and intimidation attempts, the district is moving forward in the best interest of student, family, community, and staff safety.

Locally, we have firsthand experience of COVID-19 taking a toll on our community. Nationally, when compared to white, non-hispanic persons, Native Americans are 3.5 times more likely to be hospitalized and 2.4 times more likely to die to COVID-19. Additionally, Native American children are 4.5 times more likely to have lost a primary care provider to COVID-19 than their white peers. Our student population is approximately 97% Native American. Many of those children are living in multigenerational homes. Our staff is approximately 50% Native American. Political opinions and personal beliefs do not change facts, nor do they outweigh them.

Sincerely,


Deb Smith, Superintendent