

PGISD says 5 staff members test positive for coronavirus

The Pleasant Grove Independent School District confirmed five staff members tested positive for COVID-19, while nine are considered at high risk of exposure to the virus, less than a week before they plan to return to school on Monday morning.

Thursday afternoon, the following statement was sent to the Texarkana Gazette by the district:

"The safety and security of our students and staff is our top priority at Pleasant Grove ISD. At this time, Pleasant Grove ISD has been notified that five staff members have tested positive for COVID-19 and nine staff members are considered at a high risk of exposure to COVID-19. All of these individuals have self-quarantined. In addition, Pleasant Grove ISD has personally communicated with individuals who we believe have been affected by COVID-19 due to their on-campus activities. We are following the district's State of Mind Return to School protocol written with guidance from the Texas Education Agency's Public Health Planning Guidance. In every COVID-19 situation, Pleasant Grove ISD has coordinated its response with guidance from our local health authority and/or our director of emergency management and we will continue this practice. This practice ensures there is not one individual making a decision in regards to potential exposure, but a team of trained professionals working together making decisions to protect everyone involved."

The names of the infected staff members were not released.

PGISD Superintendent Chad Pirtle posted a letter on the district's website addressing the situation.

"I want to be transparent in sharing that we will have cases of COVID-19 throughout this school year on our campuses," Pirtle stated in the letter. "Within our staff, we currently have five confirmed COVID-19 cases and nine individuals who are considered at a moderate to high risk of exposure. These individuals are all self-quarantined and will not return until they meet the return to school protocol."

Pirtle outlined the guidelines for what the district's response will be to these cases, as well as what the protocol will be if there are any future cases, with information from the district's State of Mind Return to School packet.

For more information, visit the district's website at pgisd.net.

As of now, PGISD still plans on opening its doors for the 2020-21 school year Monday.

More information on this story will be released as it is gathered.