

February 2, 2022

Dear Parents, Students and Employees,

I'm pleased to share some very good news with you. Student attendance has improved to over 90% this week. Case numbers are down and our testing clinic positivity rate for the last ten days of January decreased to 6.5%. Almost 50% of our students have achieved some level of natural protection from COVID-19 within the last 90 days or are protected through vaccination.

DCSD and our neighboring districts have followed the guidance from NYSDOH, NYSED and the executive orders from two governors. In Dansville, we have implemented numerous mitigation strategies and exceeded recommendations by deploying a school and community based testing clinic. We know our numbers better than anyone in Albany because:

- ❖ Our parents inform us of positive cases in the household to protect others.
- ❖ Nurses and testing technicians are doing a great job identifying cases and collecting data.
- ❖ NYS has ceased to comprehensively count positivity rates and actual case numbers.

**Now is the time for local control to be restored to schools.** School communities, working together in consultation with local health officials, local medical professionals and families, need local authority restored to make decisions on masking and other mitigation strategies.

At DCSD, we count our cases and positivity rates. We see them in weekly reports. The number of cases and trend charts are provided on pages 3 and 4 of this letter. Recent numbers, the multitude of protections available and research on the severity of Omicron justify the return of local control.

This past Saturday with the full support of our School Board, I joined colleagues from around our region and met with members of the NYS Senate and Assembly including Assemblywoman Majorie Byrnes, Assemblyman Stephen Hawley, Senator Edward Rath and Senator Patrick Gallivan. Also in attendance were Congressman Chris Jacobs and representatives from Senator Schumer's and Senator Gillibrand's offices.

With one voice we advocated for a return of local control and the authority to make decisions about what is best for our school communities. In the coming days and weeks, I'll be asking you to support our advocacy through a letter writing campaign.

**School Budget for 2022-23.** We are currently planning the school budget for next year. When meeting with elected officials on Saturday, I was surprised to learn that even local politicians think

that all school districts are flush with money. While some are, many rural districts like DCSD, are not. We informed legislators that our districts have not yet seen a single penny of the federal rescue money that was promised to us for the 2021-22 school year. We need that money to cover existing program costs.

NYS legislators and the governor are patting themselves on the back for promising to restore Foundation Aid to schools. The truth is that the final payment will be delivered 17 years after the court order to make us whole. We have lost the compounding increases that full Foundation Aid would have brought had NYS followed the law so many years ago. What's worse, wealthy districts with large tax bases are seeing record increases in Foundation Aid while many in high need rural districts are receiving a minimal 3% increase.

**So while we begin the battle for local control we also are fighting for fiscal equity for our school community and our kids.**

NYS has a responsibility to repave State Highway 63 and has failed to fulfill this responsibility for many years. We are reminded of this every time we drive down Main Street. The same is true for school based aids. DCSD has been underfunded for years and continued indifference in Albany will lead to potholes and breakdowns along this literal and figurative rough road.

We will need your help in self advocacy for equitable funding for high need rural schools as well as for local control. I'll explain more about how you can help in the days and weeks ahead, but for now, please [complete this survey on masking so that we can better understand how our school community feels and what you think about this issue.](#)

Sincerely,

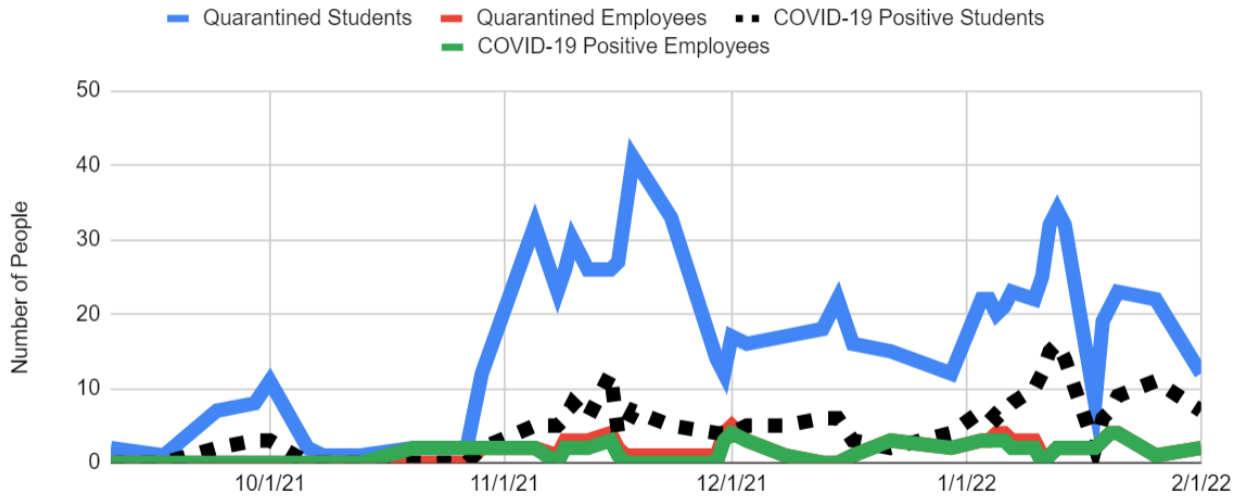
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul J. Alioto", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul J. Alioto  
Superintendent of Schools

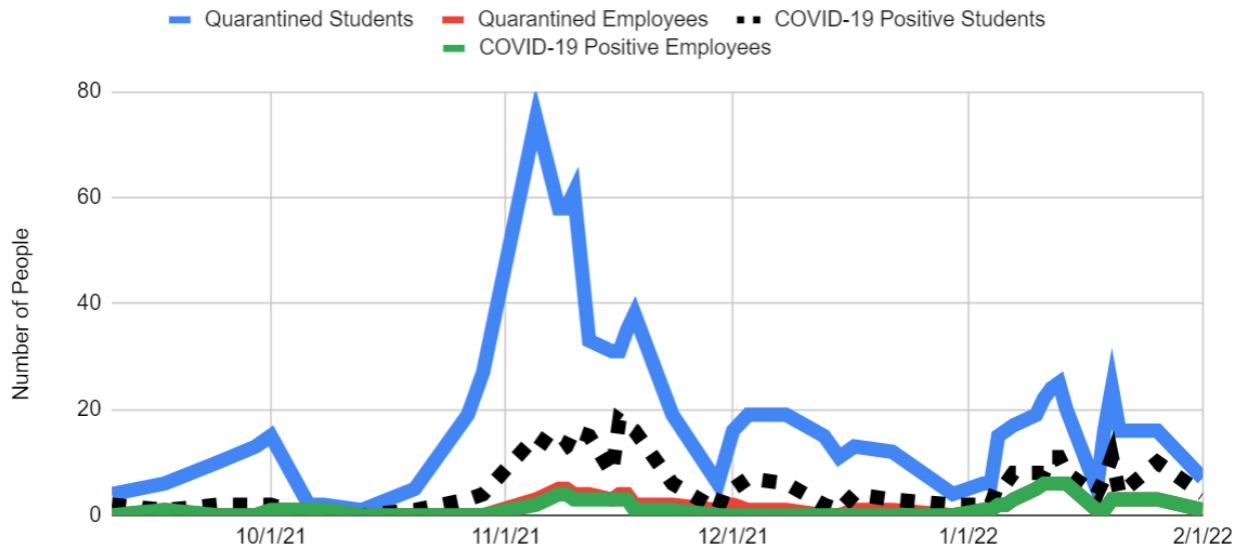
**Positives and Quarantines.**

2/1/22	DPS	EBH ES	DHS	District	Totals
<b>Quarantined Students</b>	12	7	16	NA	35
<b>Quarantined Employees</b>	2	1	3	0	6
<b>COVID-19 Positive Students</b>	7	4	12	NA	23
<b>COVID-19 Positive Employees</b>	2	1	3	0	6

**Dansville Primary School**



**EBH Elementary School**



# Dansville High School

