

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
January 7, 2022

Upcoming Events – Dr. Kenneth C. Hurst

January 14: End of Second Quarter

January 17: Martin Luther King Holiday

January 18: Secondary Work Day (No School Middle and High Schools)

Next Board of Education Meeting January 19, 2022– Dr. Kenneth C. Hurst, Sr.

Communications Update - Ryan Phillips

January 3, 2022

East Bay Schools Make Big Push to Test Students, Staff | CBS San Francisco

OAKLAND (KPIX) — There's a major effort underway to get Bay Area students tested for COVID before returning to school on Monday. Oakland Unified and West Contra Costa County Unified school districts were testing and handing out at-home test kits to students on Sunday. At the Fremont High School test site in Oakland, parents and students said the average wait time was about four hours and the line stretched almost three blocks.

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Bay Area school districts offering COVID testing to students amid post-holiday surge fears | ABC7 News

The first big test of the New Year for many Bay Area school children won't have anything to do with math or science, but instead, making sure they don't bring COVID back to the classroom. West Contra Costa County ordered 30,000 test kits, with plans to distribute them at two sites, Richmond's Kennedy High School and Pinole Valley High School on Sunday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., just in time for Monday's start of classes.

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West Contra Costa County Unified distributes at-home COVID testing kits | KRON4

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, Calif. (KRON) — West Contra Costa Unified School District Superintendent Doctor Chris Hurst is trying to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak on school grounds before school resumes after winter break. “We want to make sure we keep a safe environment,” said Hurst. Hundreds of people lined up in their cars Sunday morning to get their hands on a COVID-19 at home testing kit.

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East Bay Schools Make Big Push to Test Students, Staff | KPIX

OAKLAND (KPIX) — There's a major effort underway to get Bay Area students tested for COVID before returning to school on Monday. Oakland Unified and West Contra Costa County Unified school districts were testing and handing out at-home test kits to students on Sunday. At the Fremont High

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School test site in Oakland, parents and students said the average wait time was about four hours and the line stretched almost three blocks.

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January 4, 2022

15000 at-home Covid tests distributed to West Contra Costa Unified students | SFBay.ca

As schools open up after winter break, the West Contra Costa Unified School District distributed 15,000 Covid-19 test kits to their students on Sunday. West Contra Costa Unified School District, Covid-19, Pinole Valley High School, Kennedy High School, Kenneth Chris Hurst, Marissa Glidden, United Teachers of Richmond, Covid-19 testing, at-home Covid-19 testing, fast5,

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WCCUSD Hands Out 15,000 At-Home COVID-19 Tests To Students | Pinole, CA Patch

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CA — As schools open up after winter break, the West Contra Costa Unified School District distributed 15,000 COVID-19 test kits to their students on Sunday. District staff handed out tests to over 5,000 cars at Pinole Valley High School and Kennedy High School before the district's first day of school on Monday. The hope is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools following a rise in omicron variant cases during the holiday season.

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West Contra Costa County Unified passes out at-home COVID testing kits before school | San Francisco Times

Before classroom education resumes following the winter break, West Contra Costa Unified School District Superintendent Doctor Chris Hurst moves to stop a virus outbreak on school premises, [KRON4](#) reported. He said: “We want to make sure we keep a safe environment.” On Sunday morning, hundreds of residents wait in their cars to receive at-home COVID-19 testing kits. The measure to cover every student and employee on COVID-19 testing will ensure that no one reports back to school without knowing if they are positive for the virus or not.

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Thousands of Bay Area students returned to schools Monday amid omicron surge. Here's how it went | SF Chronicle

As many Bay Area districts reopened Monday after a two-week winter break, some schools saw a jump in staff and student absences amid skyrocketing coronavirus cases as [omicron continued to rage](#) through the region. Districts scrambled to get students and staff tested over the weekend and into Monday but amid overwhelming demand, teachers and parents in some districts said the efforts came up short.

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January 5, 2022

West Contra Costa Unified distributes 15,000 at-home Covid tests in quick turnaround | EdSource
Moving quickly, West Contra Costa Unified managed to distribute 15,000 at-home Covid tests to students before they returned to school Monday from the long holiday break. Despite Gov. Gavin Newsom's [pledge](#) to provide at-home rapid tests to all 6 million California students, only about half of them made it out to counties by Monday, the [Los Angeles Times reported](#). West Contra Costa Unified only received its allotment of 28,000 tests Thursday afternoon, district spokesman Ryan Phillips said, as parents grew concerned about whether they would get the tests in time for school.

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West Contra Costa Schools To Require KN-95 Masks For All School Staffers | KPIX

RICHMOND (CBS SF) — Beginning next week, the West Contra Costa Unified School District will require all staff members to wear a medical-grade KN-95 mask while at school sites. The new requirement comes as COVID cases are surging in the Bay Area and the state as well as throughout the country. The announcement from WCCUSD comes days after district staffers and volunteers Sunday distributed 15,000 COVID-19 test kits to families to enable more students to return to school Monday.

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WCCUSD to require that staff wear KN-95 masks at school sites | Richmond Standard

The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) announced today that all staff members at school sites will be required to wear a medical grade KN-95 mask while at work starting Monday, Jan. 10. The district, which employs 3,000 classified and certificated employees and serves 28,000 students, “has ordered enough masks for each employee to have one KN-95 mask per week through the end of the school year,” according to the school district. As the highly-transmissible omicron variant of COVID-19 surges across the U.S., the California Department of Public Health has [recommended](#) upgrading masks from the less-effective cloth versions to better prevent its spread. WCCUSD expects the KN-95 masks to arrive this week and to distribute them to school sites before Monday.

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WCCUSD distributes 15K COVID-19 test kits to students before start of school | Richmond Standard

About 15,000 COVID-19 in-home test kits were distributed to West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) students on Sunday in advance of Monday's return to school from the winter break, the district announced. More than 5,000 cars lined up at drive-through locations at Kennedy High and Pinole Valley High to receive the free kits, which were distributed by district staff and volunteers as officials prepare amid the latest surge in COVID-19 cases. Additional test kits from the drive-through event will be distributed to school sites as a one-time resource, the district said.

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Richmond elementary school pivots to distance learning amid COVID outbreak | KTVU

RICHMOND, Calif. - Richmond's King Elementary School has reverted to distance learning due to a growing number of positive [COVID](#) tests, school officials confirmed on Wednesday. West Contra Costa

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Costa Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Chris Hurst made the decision to go remote starting Jan. 4 and will continue until Jan. 11. The district had walked back their original statement that had distance learning in effect through Jan. 18.

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January 6, 2022

West Contra Costa school district to close for 2 days due to COVID-19 | KRON4

RICHMOND, Calif. (KRON) – The West Contra Costa Unified School District will be closed for two days due to the rise in COVID-19 cases, according to the superintendent. Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Chris Hurst sent out a notice that the omicron variant is impacting the district and are seeing more staff absences. In order to allow more time for the community to recover, the district will have two “smoke days” on Friday, Jan. 7, and Monday, Jan. 10.

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COVID-19 Outbreak Forces Contra Costa County School to Temporarily Shut Down | NBC Bay Area

The West Contra Costa Unified School District has temporarily shut down campuses because of a spike in COVID-19 cases. That means a brief return to remote learning for about 28,000 students across the East Bay district. It began with the closure of Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Richmond, where initially 10 students in various grades tested positive Monday. The temporary districtwide shutdown is scheduled for Friday and Monday so crews can conduct deep cleanings at all campuses.

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COVID-19 Outbreak Forces West Contra Costa District to Temporarily Close Campuses | NBC Bay Area

[Link to Video Coverage](#)

COVID: All West Contra Costa Schools to Close for Long Omicron Recovery Weekend | KPIX

RICHMOND (CBS SF) — Officials with the West Contra Costa County Unified School District on Wednesday announced all schools would be closed this Friday and Monday as the district copes with staffing shortages and student illness caused by the omicron-fueled COVID case surge. The message addressing the community and announcing the planned school closure was posted [on the WCCUSD website](#) Wednesday evening.

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Bay Area school district to provide fresh KN95 mask for staff through the school year | KTVU

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, Calif. - West Contra Costa Unified School District announced Tuesday that all staff at school sites will be required to wear KN95 masks starting January 10. School officials are taking the extra safety precautions in light of the highly-infectious omicron variant of COVID-19 that is [currently surging](#) across the U.S. "Everyone on our school sites deserve to feel safe and informed about

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COVID-19 and we are always prepared to adapt our safety measures when the conditions change," said Superintendent Kenneth Chris Hurst.

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WCCUSD adds COVID-19 test sites to keep kids safe at school | Richmond Confidential

Three more COVID-19 testing sites opened up this week for students and staff in the West Contra Costa Unified School District, which resumed in-person classes on Monday amid a coronavirus spike propelled by the highly contagious omicron variant of the virus. The district already was offering tests at most schools and on Tuesday, added the Alvarado Adult School in Richmond, the Ohlone Elementary School campus in Hercules, and the district central office in Richmond to that list. Those sites are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., [according to a district news release](#).

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East Bay school district to close classrooms for two days under 'strain' of omicron | SF Chronicle

After a “challenging” few days back in classrooms and a significant number of teacher absences, West Contra Costa Unified officials announced that schools will be closed Friday and Monday to alleviate some of the pressure on district staff. “The virus and a large number of absences is putting an immense strain on our system,” Superintendent Chris Hurst said in a letter sent to families Wednesday. “The rapid spread of the virus requires an aggressive response to ensure safety.” Hurst called the closures “smoke days,” referring to closures related to air quality during wildfire season.

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WCCUSD To Require Teachers To Wear KN-95 Masks | Pinole, CA Patch

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CA — West Contra Costa Unified School District teachers will soon be required to wear KN-95 face masks while working to prevent the spread of COVID-19, district officials said this week. The KN-95 requirement for the district's some 3,000 classified and certified teachers and other educational staff members will take effect Monday, with the district providing one mask per week to teachers for the rest of the school year.

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January 7, 2022

Bay Area schools close due to COVID-19 case spikes | East Bay Times

In the midst of a tumultuous back-to-school week underscored by numerous COVID-19 cases that have led to half-empty classrooms, administrators filling in for absent teachers and long testing lines, at least one large school district and some private and charter schools are closing temporarily, and others around the Bay Area are scrambling to keep classrooms open. West Contra Costa Unified School District announced that it is closing its 54 schools Friday and Monday after almost a fourth of the district's students missed class this week. The district is also closing its three COVID testing sites on Monday. The district does not plan to offer online instruction during the temporary closure.

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High absences prompt WCCUSD to close schools for two days | Richmond Confidential

With a flare in COVID-19 cases keeping many students and teachers out of school this week, the West Contra Costa Unified School District has decided to shut down on Friday and Monday.

The district will take two “smoke days” that the state allows superintendents to use at their discretion, to deep clean its buildings, Superintendent Kenneth “Chris” Hurst said in a news release Wednesday. Hurst attributed the high absentee rate to the omicron variant of the coronavirus, which is raging across the country. There were [more than 11,300 COVID-19 cases](#) in Contra Costa County on Thursday, an increase of about 500 from the day before, according to county Health Services. And the infection rate is particularly high for middle- and high-school-age children.

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West Contra Costa School Closures, COVID Testing Efforts Draw Mixed Reaction | KPIX5

HERCULES (KPIX) — West Contra Costa Unified School District will close on Friday and Monday because of continued COVID-19 outbreaks. Administrators hope to stop the spread of the Omicron variant among staff and students before reopening campuses Tuesday. “I have my concerns, yes, so we just stay at home,” one woman said while waiting to pick up her granddaughter. “We’re just taking all the precautions we can.”

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West Contra Costa Unified Closes Schools Friday, Monday Due To Covid Spike | SFGATE

Officials with the West Contra Costa Unified School District have decided to close all schools and district offices Friday and Monday due to a spike in COVID-19 cases among staff and students. In a message posted on the district website, Superintendent Kenneth "Chris" Hurst said the aim of the decision is to "alleviate some of the pressure and allow more time for those in our community who are out sick to heal." The district includes schools in the cities of El Cerrito, Richmond, San Pablo, Pinole and Hercules and the unincorporated areas of Bayview-Montalvin Manor, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, North Richmond and Tara Hills.

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