



**DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**

**MEMO**

September 7, 2022

Dear DCSD Families,

As we have stated many times, we believe students learn best when learning in-person within our school buildings. We also understand that closing DCSD schools places a burden on our families. This evening, the valley and Lake started to fill with smoke from the Moquito Fire near Oxbow Reservoir. Since we may be on the verge of a future that may be filled with smoke, I wanted to provide our DCSD families with guidance on how we will proceed:

1. We cannot emphasize enough that parents should make the decision that is best for their child. If at any time, you feel the conditions are unsafe to take or send your child to school, you may keep your child home for the day regardless of DCSD's decision to hold school. In these situations, the school will support the parent's decision, and though the student will be marked absent the school will work with the parent and student to develop a plan for schoolwork and assignments to be completed in a timely manner.

In deciding to keep a student home from school, parents are asked to use discretion. Students who do not attend school will be counted as absent. Should a student's absences exceed the 10% allowable by state law, it will be necessary to document a student's health condition with a notice from the student's medical provider. Students with respiratory or other pre-existing health conditions may need an additional individual adaptation. Parents are encouraged to make sure that any medical related needs are coordinated with the school nurse.

2. For years, DCSD has used a guidance document created by the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA) which provides recommendations for schools and others responsible for children during a wildfire smoke event. An Air Quality Index (AQI) of 301-500 is considered hazardous, but assumes students are still attending school while remaining indoors for recess, physical education, etc.
3. With the exception of our Lake Schools, Douglas County School District schools are equipped with air conditioning. With air conditioning at our valley schools, we are able to significantly limit the smoke entering our schools, which creates more manageable learning environments for teachers and students. Without air conditioning at our lake schools, our learning environments become more challenging.
4. As a result of #3, Douglas County School Districts will operate as followings:

- a. **Valley Schools** – Air quality will be determined using the Purple Air website. Readings will be taken at 5:00 AM from across all the Carson Valley to determine if schools will be open for the day.

If the majority of the readings from across Carson Valley are 500 or less, valley schools will be open. If it is determined that school will be open, it will remain in session for the entire day. If the majority of the readings are over 500, then school will be closed for the day.

- b. **Lake Schools** – Air quality will also be determined using the Purple Air website. DCSD will utilize the Purple Air monitor at George Whittell High School. The reading will be taken at 5:00 AM.

Due to the lack of air conditioning and our need to bring more outside air into the building for circulation, our lake schools will be closed if the AQI reading is higher than 300. If the reading is 300 or less, the lake schools will be open. If it is determined that school will be open, it will remain in session for the entire day.

2. DCSD will continue to operate our bus transportation. The morning temperatures allow for us to keep all bus windows closed to reduce the level of smoke. However, with the lack of air conditioning in most of our DCSD buses, we have to balance the afternoon temperature on the bus with the quantity of smoke. During the afternoon runs, many of our DCSD buses will have to operate with windows down to ensure the temperature on the bus is bearable. We encourage parents to consider transporting your children during this time if you have concerns.
3. To avoid 5:30 AM wake-up calls, if parents **do not** receive a text, email or phone call, and if there is no announcement on the district's website or Facebook page, your child's school will be open. We will only call in the morning for school closures.
4. DCSD will continue to monitor our local conditions, and we reserve the right to make changes as necessary. We will certainly be proactive and communicate any to our families.

We truly appreciate your understanding!

Sincerely,



Keith Lewis  
Superintendent