Confirmed COVID-19 cases at Collier County schools nearly doubled in November

Dan DeLuca Naples Daily News

Published 11:25 a.m. ET Dec. 4, 2020

Confirmed COVID-19 cases nearly doubled at Collier County's primary and secondary schools in November, according to data from the Florida Department of Health.

Through Nov. 28, the state reported 327 cumulative cases of students and staff associated with these schools and facilities. This total, which encompasses all cases from Sept. 6, includes students and faculty who are learning from home and teleworking.

A Naples Daily News analysis shows that's 93% percent more than the 169 confirmed COVID-19 cases through Oct. 31.

Statewide, cases more than doubled at Florida schools during November. Florida reported 20,633 COVID-19 cases at its schools through Nov. 28, 112% more than the 9,725 reported through Oct. 31.

In all, there are 66 primary and secondary schools and facilities in Collier that have reported at least one COVID-19 case through Nov. 28. These include public and private elementary, middle and high schools, special learning centers, and school district offices.

Additionally, the two colleges located in Collier County reported 34 cumulative cases through Nov. 28, led by Ave Maria with 26. Florida Southwestern's Collier campus reported six. That brings the total number of COVID-19 cases at Collier's schools and colleges to 361 through Nov. 28.

The information in the state's weekly school report reflects all laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in students and staff associated with all Florida primary, secondary and post-secondary schools that have resumed classes. All data is subject to change and as

epidemiological investigations progress, more details often become available and cases are updated where appropriate.

A Naples Daily News analysis revealed that of those 327 cases, 244 or 75%, were students. Faculty and staff made up 9% of the cases while the rest were listed as unknown.

Nearly 73% of those cases were individuals who showed symptoms. Nineteen percent tested positive but reported no symptoms. The rest are unknown at this time.

To date, seven Collier schools have reported at least 10 COVID-19 cases. Six of those are high schools, including Gulf Coast High, whose 30 cases lead the county and represent 9% of Collier's total positive tests.

According to the state, of those 327 cases in Collier County, high schools have the most with 118, followed by elementary schools (105) and middle schools (53). Cases associated with elementary schools showed the biggest jump in November, increasing 106% from 51 through Oct. 31 to 105 as of Nov. 28.

On Nov. 2, about 4,700 students returned to Collier public school campuses for the second quarter after making the switch from virtual learning. That means more than 31,500 students, or 74% of the district's student enrollment, will be on school campuses for classes for the rest of the fall semester, which ends Jan. 15. Collier public schools are scheduled to be closed for two weeks for Christmas break.

More: Pointing to closing 'blunder,' DeSantis says schools should bring struggling students back in-person

On Monday, Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that Florida public schools will remain open in 2021 with families retaining the option to keep students at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. DeSantis said that with other states returning to virtual-only learning as cases spiked, he wanted to reassure parents that would not happen in Florida.

The next day, Florida became the third state to surpasses 1 million COVID-19 cases.

COVID-19 and Collier schools

Five highest cases (high schools)

Gulf Coast: 30
Palmetto Ridge: 18

Naples: 14
Barron Collier: 13
Golden Gate: 12
Immokalee 12

Five highest cases (middle schools)

Manatee: 12
Immokalee: 9
Pine Ridge: 8
Corkscrew: 5
Golden Gate: 5
North Naples: 5

Five highest cases (elementary schools)

Estates: 8
Lake Trafford: 8
Parkside: 8
Mike Davis: 7
Corkscrew: 6
Eden Park: 6
Veterans Memorial: 6