

Dear Staff and Parents of Watertown-Mayer:

The state of Minnesota yesterday provided new guidance to school districts on reopening schools in the fall. School in the Watertown-Mayer district is scheduled to start Aug. 31 with a plan developed collaboratively between the district and the state that keeps staff and students safe, and allows for the best possible learning opportunities given the circumstances.

The state is providing two forms of guidance to school districts:

1. The way education is delivered will be based on the number of COVID-19 cases in the county in which the district resides (the Governor called this a starting point), and
2. Consultation between district administration and a Regional Support Team representing the Minnesota Departments of Education and Health to address local circumstances.

The first form of guidance, called Learning Model Parameters by MDE, is a table (see below) that shows how schools will be able to open based on the number of current cases of COVID-19 in a given county. The second form of guidance takes into consideration the local situation of a given school district. For example, students attending the Watertown-Mayer school district live in Carver, Wright, and Hennepin counties. The state will help district administration determine local risk factors that lead to the best learning model to keep staff and students as safe as possible. In addition, we will be surveying staff and parents next week to enlist your help in designing the most appropriate learning model for Watertown-Mayer schools.

If we were to start school today, we would probably have a hybrid of in-person and distance learning for our students (more information is below), but many factors will influence what our final model looks like. Even then, if the number of cases of COVID-19 changes in our area at some point during the school year, we may have to change our model.

We know that you would like to know now exactly what to expect when school starts - we do too. We ask that you be patient with us, and be open to being flexible. None of us has done this before, but we have an amazing team of educators who are committed to providing education to your students in a safe environment.

If you have questions, please contact the district office at 952-955-0480.

Additional updates will be sent by email, and posted to our website and social media accounts regularly throughout the month of August.

#### **Additional Resources**

- [Executive Order 20-82 "Safe Learning Plan"](#) (July 30, 2020) (PDF)
- [MDE Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools: Safe Learning Plan for 2020-2021](#) (July 30, 2020)(PDF)
- [MDH 2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools: Health Considerations](#) (July 30,2020)(PDF)

#### **Learning Model Parameters**

1. 0-9 COVID-19 cases per 10,000  
- In-person learning for all students

2. 10-19 COVID-19 cases per 10,000
  - In-person learning for elementary students
  - Hybrid learning for secondary students
3. 20-29 COVID-19 cases per 10,000
  - Hybrid learning for all students
4. 30-49 COVID-19 cases per 10,000
  - Hybrid learning for elementary students
  - Distance learning for secondary students
5. 50+ COVID-19 cases per 10,000
  - Distance learning for all students

### **Additional Information**

We continue to plan for three scenarios that students may go in and out of over the coming year; in-person learning, hybrid learning, and distance learning. In addition, some families may choose distance learning only. Here is an overview of each of the three scenarios we are currently planning for.

#### **Scenario 1: In person learning**

- Schools will create as much space between students and teachers as is feasible, recognizing that 6 feet of physical distancing may not always be possible during primary instructional time in the classroom or on the bus.
- All students, staff and other people present in school facilities or riding school transportation are required to wear a face covering, per the [governor's executive order](#).
- Other appropriate safety and cleaning protocols will be in place. Although too lengthy to include in this email, you can see the complete [Minnesota Department of Health requirements and recommendations for schools here](#).
- Distance learning will be provided for those who choose it (hybrid learning is not an option for individual families, and will be implemented at a district and school level, if necessary).
- Co-curricular activities will be guided by an upcoming decision from the Minnesota State High School League that may come as soon as next week.

#### **Scenario 2: Hybrid learning**

- Student capacity will be limited to 50 percent in schools and on buses, with the other 50 percent of students participating in distance learning. Students will attend school in person two days per week.
- Students will be divided into two groups alphabetically by household in order to keep all students in a family on the same schedule.
- Physical distancing guidelines will be implemented at all times within school facilities according to [Minnesota Department of Health](#) requirements.

#### **Scenario 3: Distance learning**

This scenario may be implemented if the COVID-19 virus spreads at a rate that exceeds the standards from the Department of Health for in-person and hybrid instruction. Online distance learning will be facilitated, in order to maintain a class schedule as close to normal as possible, and/or in flexible time as needed.