



New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Public Schools

Independent School District No. 2168

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Empowering students with knowledge and skills to succeed.

2020-2021 School Year Learning Model Family Update

October 1, 2020

County Positive Case Rate

Dear Families:

As many of you are aware, the 14-day COVID-19 case rate for Waseca County has continued to increase over the past several weeks including today's published rate of 92.51 (per 10,000 people in the County) for the period between September 6 and September 19. As I shared with you on September 23 when the school district announced it would be returning the Secondary School to *Hybrid Learning* and the Elementary School would remain in *Hybrid Learning*, the school district continues to work closely with county and state public health officials in reviewing not only the 14-day published county-wide rate that lags by almost two weeks, but also looking closer at zip code data and current positive cases, isolations and quarantines within our own school district.

In my September 23 communication to you, I referenced the community testing event that was to be held in Waseca on September 23 & 24. A week later, the testing event shows a 2% positivity rate indicating a downward trend in community cases.

I also acknowledged an examination of case trends within the County after separating out the cases reported at the correctional facility in Waseca. While I would caution those who believe the correctional facility case numbers should be totally dismissed and not considered, there is some consideration given to lessening the weight factor of the total numbers within the facility as a large percentage has been isolated to the residents and not employees.

We are also monitoring case rate trends in our other two counties in which our families reside. The case rate has increased in Freeborn County that is reflected in today's published 14-day count of 31.12.

At this time, the school district does not anticipate adjusting our learning models to a more restrictive model which would be *distance learning* for one or both school buildings. The zip code data continues to suggest a low incident rate within our school district communities. As of today, we do not have any reported positive cases within our two school buildings and we have very low isolation and quarantine reported incidents.

Based on the correctional facility reported cases for the past two weeks, we should be prepared to see the 14-day published rate on October 8 to significantly increase beyond today's number, but projections show that when separating the correctional facility case rates from the remainder of the county rate, the community spread rate continues to trend downward.

Most important to our efforts of maintaining our *Hybrid Learning* model as well as being able to eventually move to an *All In Person* model beginning at the Elementary School is to make sure families

and staff members are screening daily, staying home if ill, wearing masks, socially distancing, washing/sanitizing hands often, meeting in small groups, refraining from sharing objects, no carpooling, etc. I am proud of how our students have responded to these challenges, but we cannot let up. Masking, socially distancing, and handwashing are critical while in the school buildings; however, most important is that every individual thoughtfully and thoroughly screens themselves in the morning and monitors themselves throughout the day. Thank you parents for screening your child every morning before leaving for school. When one comes to school having symptoms, it significantly increases the chances that a part or all of the school will have to be closed to *in person learning* for a period of time in the event that individual tests positive.

Thank you parents for taking the time at the start of the school year to sign the *Student Safety Protocol Parent Acknowledgement* and for your support of your child(ren) and the NRHEG Public Schools.

Dale Carlson, Superintendent