



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

November 5, 2020

Hybrid Learning Continues

Dear Families:

Today's Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) published county-wide number for Waseca County was 28.18 for the period 10/11 - 10/24. When separating out the correctional facility resident case rate, the community spread case rate is projected to be around 25. Looking ahead to the 14-day period 10/18 - 10/31 to be published next week on November 12, the overall case rate is projected to increase slightly to the 28-32 range with a non-correctional facility case rate within that same range.

Today's Steele County number was 29.17 for the period 10/11-10/24. The case rate is projected to be in the range of 33-37 for the period 10/18 - 10/31 to be published next week. Today's Freeborn County number was 31.12. The case rate is projected to increase into the 40s for the period 10/18-10/31 to be published next week. We have developed a COVID-19 Dashboard that you can find on the website at [COVID-19 Dashboard](#). We plan to update the dashboard weekly on Fridays.

We have experienced an increase this week in quarantine numbers among both students and staff. We have also experienced additional positive cases within our school community this week. At this time, we plan to remain in *Hybrid Learning* for both buildings, but this could change with short notice if it is determined we are unable to staff to the appropriate level needed in either building, and/or if the number of positive cases increase to the point we need to move to *distance learning* for a period of time in one or both buildings.

As we have worked with our MDH public health officials this week in examining our cases, we have been reminded of behaviors within our own school community of those who are to be in quarantine or isolation and yet, are out in the community. We have reason to believe there are individuals who have tested positive (isolated) and knowingly were in close contact with others even after having symptoms and/or testing positive. In some of these cases, it is possible that the positive case exposed another individual who then attended school as they were not quarantined at the time and were not experiencing symptoms. Public health officials are sharing with us that it is these types of actions that can result in virus spread within a community and school building and cause a school to move to *distance learning* due to virus spread.

We believe most students learn best when they are physically present in school. While we have not been able to be *in-person* everyday yet this year, we do believe the next best learning model for students is *Hybrid Learning*. We believe providing some *in-person learning* each week is a better learning model for most students than *distance learning* every day. However, we will not place students and staff at risk by remaining in *Hybrid Learning* if we believe we are going to experience an uncontrollable and untraceable virus spread within our school buildings.

Thank you for your support of the safety measures being taken at the school including masking, distancing, washing hands, and keeping your child home if ill which also includes experiencing any of the common symptoms associated with the virus. If you have a family member who is currently isolated due to testing positive, please make sure all other family members remain quarantined and contact your child's school. In the event a child tests positive, we encourage you to contact the school or MDH immediately so that contact tracing may begin. Please go to the MDH website at [MDH COVID-19 Situation Update](#) to find the most up to date information.

We continue to work closely with county and state public health officials in monitoring the most relevant information and metrics that will guide our learning model decisions. Thank you for all you are doing to take care of yourself, your family, and those around you.

Dale Carlson
Superintendent