



New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Public Schools

Independent School District No. 2168

District Office

306 Ash Avenue South
New Richland, MN 56072
(507)465-3206
Fax (507)465-8633
Dale Carlson, Superintendent

Secondary School

306 Ash Avenue South
New Richland, MN 56072
(507)465-3205
Fax (507)465-8633
David Bunn, Principal

Elementary School

600 School Street
Ellendale, MN 56026
(507)684-3181
Fax (507)684-2108
Douglas Anderson, Principal

Empowering students with knowledge and skills to succeed.

2020-2021 School Year Learning Model Family Update

December 23, 2020

Preparing Elementary for *In-Person Learning* and Secondary's Return to *Hybrid Learning*

Dear Families:

In my last update to you on December 16, I mentioned that both schools had started preparing to return to *hybrid learning* on January 11 as directed by the Board at the December 15 Special School Board meeting. I also mentioned that the Governor had directed the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to provide guidance that would allow elementary schools to consider moving to *in-person learning* no earlier than January 18 as long as additional mitigation strategies were put in place.

Since last week on Wednesday, staff leaders have been developing transition plans to prepare the Elementary School to move to *in-person learning* as early as Monday, January 18. A great deal of work and planning is required to make the move to *in-person learning* as staff examines MDE's updated [Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year](#) that has already been updated twice in the past week. The Plan outlines a number of additional mitigation strategies that you can find beginning on page 10. Most of the additional mitigation strategies also apply to the Secondary School being able to return to *hybrid learning* including:

- Testing for staff must be made available every two weeks.
- All staff must wear a mask and a face shield when in the presence of others including when others are present in the classroom, hallway, office areas, cafeteria, etc.
- Students in physical education classes must wear a mask at all times.
- Staff must maintain at least a 6-foot distance from students and staff at all times.

When planning for moving to *in-person learning* at the Elementary School, we will need to make sure that we can implement the following before moving to *in-person learning*.

- A 2-week rolling start is implemented in which no more than three grade levels would attend in-person and the remaining grade levels would attend in hybrid learning for two weeks.
- At least 2 days of planning for staff is scheduled resulting in no school for students
- All meals must be consumed in classrooms unless we can maintain 6' distancing in the cafeteria or other common spaces
- "Specials" classes i.e. computers and perhaps music are to be held in the classroom
- PE may be held outside or in the gymnasium, but masks must be worn
- Student support programs i.e. special education, counseling, etc. may continue to pull students from the primary classrooms

More information will be shared with families as we move through the holiday break and into the week of January 4, after the School Board has had an opportunity to examine revised plans to be presented at the School Board's January 4, 2021, Organizational Meeting.

While there are encouraging signs that positive cases are trending down throughout our three counties and within our communities, the numbers are still high when compared to earlier in the school year. We continue to communicate on a regular basis with county and state public health officials as we monitor what is happening within our two schools and our four communities.

Throughout the holiday break, it is important that families continue to contact the school district to report any positive case. 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 the school nurse, Donna Olson, @ 507-416-2105 or lolson@nrheg.k12.mn.us. Having an accurate record of isolations and quarantines will be an important factor in determining if we can move forward with our planning to return to *hybrid learning* on January 11, and also the tentative planned move of the Elementary School to *in-person learning* as early as January 18.

Thank you for all you are doing to take care of yourself and those around you! I wish you a healthy and safe holiday season.

Dale Carlson
Superintendent