



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 Learning Plan Family Update

August 11, 2020

Dear Families:

I wanted to provide you with an update regarding the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

As you know, staff have been working since June in developing learning plans for three possible scenarios. As part of the survey sent to families on June 25, we defined the three scenarios as:

1. **In-person Learning for All Students.** In this planning scenario, schools create as much space between students and teachers as is feasible during the day, but will not be held strictly to enforcing 6 feet of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom. Health and safety guidelines per the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) should be followed.
2. **Hybrid Learning.** In this planning scenario, schools must limit the overall number of people in school facilities and on transportation vehicles to 50% maximum occupancy. Sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet between people must occur at all times. If distancing cannot be achieved in the school building, the number of occupants must be reduced.

While details are still being finalized for each school building, the *Hybrid Learning Plan* has divided students into two groups; "A" and "B." Each group will attend in-person every-other-day based on the A/B calendar presented in the specific learning plan that has not yet been released. On the day not attending in-person, students will participate in distance learning as described in the specific school plan.

3. **Distance Learning Only.** This scenario may be implemented if local, regional, or statewide COVID-19 metrics worsen significantly enough to require the suspension of in-person learning. The requirements in this guidance regarding in-person protections would not apply to the general school community, as students and staff would be utilizing distance learning and would not be gathering in groups on school grounds.

As part of our July 30 Family Update, we shared with you the [Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year](#) which sets forth five *Learning Models* that school districts must select from and implement to begin the school year in accordance with the *Safe Learning Plan*. The five models are:

1. In-person Learning for All Students
2. In-person Learning for Elementary Students & Hybrid Learning for Secondary Students
3. Hybrid Learning for All Students
4. Hybrid Learning for Elementary Students & Distance Learning for Secondary Students
5. Distance Learning for All Students

The *Safe Learning Plan* instructs school districts to determine the **base learning model** to be used to start the school year. Since receiving the guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), MDH and the Governor's Executive Order 20-82 on July 30, the District's Advisory Council, as defined in the *Safe Learning Plan*, is examining county-wide case data, health & safety best practices, and the *Learning Model Parameters* to determine how we begin the start of the school year.

At this time, the data and other indicators would direct our school district to start the school year in the *Hybrid Learning for All Students* for both schools; however, no final decision has been made. You can anticipate a decision on the *base learning model* no later than Tuesday, August 18, following the August 17 School Board meeting where the School Board will take action on the *base learning model* after receiving a recommendation from the Advisory Council.

The specific learning plans (*In-Person for All Students, Hybrid Learning, Distance Learning*) will also be presented to the School Board on August 17 for approval. You can expect detailed information about the plans shared with you the week of August 17 as well.

The safety and health of our students, staff, and ultimately our communities are the District's top priorities. We will continue to follow the MDH, MDE and executive order guidance to assist us in our decisions going forward. If the COVID 19 risk increases, we may need to switch to a more restrictive learning model, or if the risk decreases, we may turn to a less restrictive model. Ultimately we want to meet your child(ren)'s educational needs and do our best to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. We realize each model has complexities for families as well as for the school district. We hope, however, that our plan, that includes a **full-time distance learning option** within the *In-person for All Students* and the *Hybrid Learning* models, will provide your child(ren) with exciting, nurturing, and enjoyable learning experiences.

Thank you for your patience, understanding and support as we start the school year. Your continued involvement, engagement, and input will be important so that we will be able to continually improve our plans and processes in order to provide a great experience for your child(ren) in a safe environment. Do not hesitate to reach out to your child(ren)'s teacher, principal, or me so that we can assist you and your child(ren).

Dale Carlson
Superintendent