

December 17, 2020

Dear Waubun Ogema White Earth Schools Community,

We are very excited to announce our learning plan changes that we will be implementing in the 3rd quarter. We originally were going to bring our students EC-12 back to Hybrid Learning, but since Governor Walz had a press conference on December 16th in which he prioritized in person learning for our youngest students, we need to make changes to our planning.

For reference, here is a link to the updated plan:

[Updated 12.16.2020 MDE Safe Learning Plan](#)

[ADDED 12/16/20]: Note: The Safe Learning Plan has been updated so that starting on January 18, 2021, every elementary school across the state may choose to operate an in-person learning model as long as they are able to implement all updated health and safety measures. (p.4 from Safe Learning Plan)

If you read the Safe Learning Plan, you will see that the rest of the In Person Learning for younger students will be added in two week increments, three grade bands at a time. The changes in the plan prioritize in-person learning for the youngest students based on the fact that children under 10 appear to be much less likely to fall ill from COVID-19 — and to infect others — for reasons not fully understood. Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Prevention and an advisor to President-elect Joe Biden, said on his podcast last week that much remains unknown about how children spread the virus, but he thinks elementary schools can safely reopen — but not necessarily junior high and high schools.

Additional Required Mitigation Strategies and Tools Schools Must Implement for Any In-Person or Hybrid Learning Model Beginning January 18, 2021 (page 11 from Safe Learning Plan):

- Implement a rolling start process for students to be brought back to the building.
- Execute COVID-19 testing program (training and saliva test kits provided by the State; optional for school staff) every other week for all school staff, beginning January 4, 2021.
- Face masks and face shields must be worn together by school staff at all times.
- When educators cannot be six feet from students (small group and individual instruction), when possible add a clear barrier between the adult and student.
- Face coverings must be worn when engaging in indoor physical activity (e.g., during indoor recess, indoor physical education class, or when exercising in a gym)
- For early learning and elementary schools only: All student meal times and specialist lessons must be held in the classroom or outside (weather permitting). Physical education classes may continue to be held indoors outside of individual classrooms so long as students and staff are wearing face coverings.
- For in-person only: three feet of physical distancing or more is strongly recommended.

The good news is that there is sunshine and a light at the end of the tunnel. And for our youngest learners, we are able to provide in person learning (hopefully some normalcy). We will keep you updated. As always feel free to contact us with any questions.

We have sent a survey out and really need you to fill it out to help us with our planning. We are asking that it be filled out by December 21st. Thank you.

Waubun-Ogema-White Earth Schools Administration Team