



## MANITOWOC PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

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### **MPSD Will Move to Full Distance Learning Oct. 12**

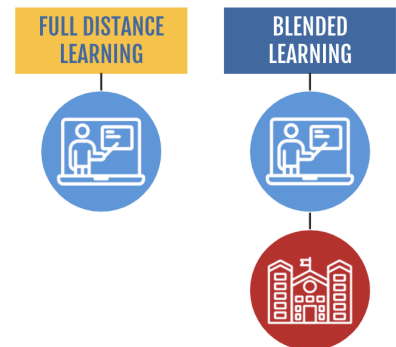
*COVID-19 spread prompts change, school return criteria set*

Manitowoc - Due to the rising community spread of COVID-19 in Manitowoc County and northeastern Wisconsin, all Manitowoc Public School District schools will move to full distance learning starting on October 12.

Students will attend school in person one or two days during the week of October 5 to meet with their teachers before moving to full distance learning. Working with county and state health officials, MPSD created a learning model decision matrix to guide when the district can safely bring students and staff back into schools for in-person, face-to-face learning. The MPSD Board of Education approved the decision matrix at a meeting Friday.

“We knew that this might happen during the school year but we hoped to avoid it as long as we could,” MPSD Superintendent Mark Holzman said. “I want to thank everyone who has worked valiantly for the past five weeks and beyond to help the District offer in-person and distance, at-home instruction. We hope to return to in-person learning as soon as possible. We believe it is the best model for our students.”

Manitowoc Public Schools started the 2020-2021 school year on Sept. 1 with a blended learning model that allowed 4K-12 students to attend school in-person some days and learn from home other days. The number of in-person days varied for elementary, middle and high school students, based on the district’s ability to safely social distance in different school building layouts while cutting class sizes to seven to 13 students.



While MPSD’s safety mitigation plan has worked well in its schools which have not seen any major outbreaks, community spread of COVID-19 has significantly increased throughout Manitowoc County and across northeastern Wisconsin. Upon the recommendation of the Manitowoc County Health Department - and as other area school districts have done in recent weeks, MPSD has decided to move to a full 100% distance learning model while the community works to stem the spread of the virus.

MPSD will monitor the **Manitowoc County burden rate, which is the total number of positive COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents over a rolling two-week period**. The data comes from the state Department of Health website, [dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/disease.htm](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/disease.htm). On September 1 Manitowoc County was averaging 100 positive cases per week. The past seven days have seen an excess of 275 positive cases. Manitowoc County’s burden rate is now at 554.

LEARNING MODEL DECISION MATRIX		
Current Learning Model	Next Learning Model	Manitowoc County Burden Rate (Positive cases per 100,000)
100% Distance	Blended	Less than or equal to 150
Blended	Traditional in-person (face-to-face)	Less than or equal to 75
Blended	100% Distance	Greater than 150
Traditional in-person (face-to-face)	Blended	Greater than 75

When Manitowoc County’s burden rate increases or decreases to a new decision matrix level for possible transition to a different learning model - and then remains at that matrix level for two consecutive cycles, the district will conduct an analysis to evaluate whether to change learning models. In addition to the use of the decision matrix, the district reserves the right to consider other factors for shifting models to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff and community.

The transition to full distance learning at all MPSD schools will begin next week:

- 4K and Elementary student cohorts will attend school on Monday Oct. 5 and Tuesday Oct. 6, with no school on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday as staff prepare for full distance learning on Monday Oct. 12.
- Middle School cohorts will attend school on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday Oct. 6, 7 or 8, with no school on Monday and Friday.
- High School cohorts will attend school on Monday Oct. 5 or Tuesday Oct. 6, with no school on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Superintendent Holzman thanked families for their continued support of their children’s education and encouraged everyone to do their part to help bring students back to school. “We ALL have the power to help by taking personal responsibility to wear a mask, watch our distance and wash our hands,” Holzman said.