



December 16, 2020

Prairie Families:

As we continue to work through this health crisis, we have deployed every strategy in our state approved Return to Learn Plan. Each decision, while driven by data and current conditions, has varying impacts on our families, staff and students. We have communicated a commitment to onsite instructional models as our priority; however, we have continued to respond to local District conditions as we work to serve students in unusual and frequently changing circumstances. Our actions have been consistent with districts of similar context and size across Iowa as we focus on the needs of students and families in this pandemic, but we respond to conditions in our school and community first and foremost.

Our District responses have included onsite instruction, hybrid instruction and online instruction. We have received feedback (positive and negative) and monitored impact related to the effectiveness of each model on our core goal to serve the educational needs of students. Since this pandemic emergency is the first of its type, we continue to examine and implement enhancements to the Return to Learn Plan Models.

Due to current conditions and trends locally, our growing understanding of the way the virus impacts educational settings, and our success in mitigation efforts while onsite, the Board of Directors has endorsed the following plan when we return to school after winter break:

Starting January 4:

- **PK-8 - Return to full onsite instruction, all students**
- **9-12 - Return in enhanced hybrid - every-other-day A/B**
 - **Decision and a date for intended return to onsite instruction will be announced by January 15**
 - [Hybrid Schedule for 9-12](#)
- **Temporary Virtual Learning -**
 - **If currently in TVL - continue through January 15 (end of 1st Semester)**
 - **Second semester participation will be communicated to families by December 22**
 - **Approved participants begin second semester, January 19**
- **Avoid district-wide closures by targeting temporary use of hybrid and online models based on school, grade or classroom-level needs.**
- **All school facilities will remain closed to outside entities until at least February 1, 2021.**

As a district, we will continue to follow local and state health guidance as we respond to this health crisis and will adjust plans and delivery models based on changing local conditions, additional guidance or changes in the law.

While conditions have improved at the moment and a vaccine is on the horizon, we still need our community's full attention and support to get students to school and keep them here in the new year. This includes continuing to support CDC mitigation strategies at school and in the community. These strategies include:

- 6-foot physical distancing when possible
- Use of face coverings
- Frequent handwashing
- Limiting gatherings
- Reporting illness, exposure, and/or positive status
- Cooperating fully and honestly with contact tracing processes conducted by the school or Linn County Public Health

Additionally, as we approach the holiday season and winter break, we ask that all members of the Prairie community make the same choices that helped during the Thanksgiving holiday. These choices include:

- Limiting unnecessary travel
- Avoiding large gatherings
- Actively monitoring your exposure to those outside of your household

The new year does not eliminate the virus or our need to both take it seriously and respond appropriately. Thank you for all you do to support your students at home and to support the difficult decisions we are making as a district with very unpredictable and ever-changing circumstances.

I wish you the very best in the upcoming winter break and in the new year.

In Service,

Doug Wheeler

Doug Wheeler, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Access metrics, considerations and all COVID-19 communications at the following site:

[District Covid Site](#)