

2-2-2021 Family Update - Grades Bridges/Kindergarten through 6 *In-Person Learning* and Grades 7-12 in *Hybrid Learning*

Families:

Since my last update on January 5, students in Bridges/Kindergarten through Grade 6 have moved to *in-person learning* and students in grades 7-12 are attending school in *hybrid learning*. We continue to work on plans to provide more “in-person” opportunities for students in our Secondary School as we work closely with our public health partners and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

As of today, the MDE learning model guidance for secondary schools has not changed; unlike the guidance for elementary students that allowed us to move grades Bridges/Kindergarten through six (6) to *in-person learning*. For grades 7-12, we are still having to work under the *hybrid learning* safety measures including a minimum of a 6 feet distance and a maximum of 50% capacity in our classrooms. I am hopeful the coming weeks provide us with opportunities to expand our *in-person learning* at the secondary level.

We continue to monitor the positive cases throughout our three counties and within our communities. While the county-wide case rates are down from extremely high numbers in November and December, the rates are still high per the Minnesota Department of Health parameters. For our three counties of Freeborn, Steele and Waseca, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) published 14-day county-wide numbers for the period of January 3 - 16 ranged from 49 to 116. The case rates for the period of January 10 through January 23 to be published this week on February 4 for the three counties are projected to be in the range from 35 to 85. We 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.

As essential workers, school district employees are now having the opportunity to receive the vaccine through the State of Minnesota as well as county public health departments. I am hopeful that the majority of our employees will have received the first dose of the vaccine by the middle of February which could be a factor in moving our Secondary School to a less restrictive learning model.

The district has received a few questions regarding domestic and international travel, and if the district will require testing and/or a quarantine period before students may return to *in-person learning* as well as activities. At this time, the district is following the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and MDH for students and staff traveling out of the country. Please see [CDC: Travel during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) and [Protect Yourself & Others: COVID-19 - Minnesota Dept. of Health](#) for more information. Out-of-state travel, including international, is highly discouraged by both the CDC and MDH at this time. Families should take all necessary precautions in order to minimize the threat of a virus spread once they return to their home, community and school. However, at this time, the school district is not requiring testing and/or a quarantine period for students returning from out-of-state or international travel unless required by MDH or the State of Minnesota. Please stay alert to future travel guidance and restrictions as they may change in the coming days, weeks and months.

If you have a family member who is currently having any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or testing for COVID-19 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 keeping our Secondary School in *hybrid learning*, and the Elementary School to *in-person learning*.

Moving forward, we know how quickly the number of positive cases and/or quarantines impacting students and staff in a building can change beginning with our ability to adequately staff a building. Families need to be ready to move to a more restrictive learning model i.e. distance learning, in a short period of time.

Thank you for all you are doing to take care of yourself and those around you!

Dale Carlson, Superintendent