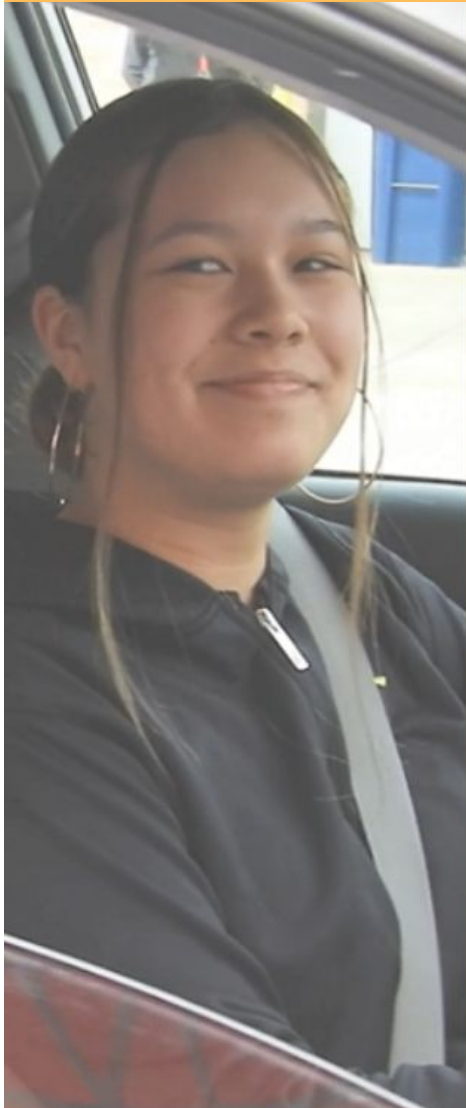


Return to Learn Update

January 14, 2021



ISD 709

Guiding Principles

FOR RE-OPENING SCHOOLS

- 1 Ensure the safety and wellness of students and staff
- 2 Deliver high-quality instruction to students, regardless of delivery model
- 3 Equity: Ensuring all means all
- 4 Optimize use of resources (space & materials)
- 5 Community and stakeholder engagement in plan development

Equity Criteria:

Access

Participation

Representation

Outcomes

ISD709.org/Equity

Current Model and Planning

Currently in distance learning at elementary and secondary levels. We are preparing for:

- In-person classes for PK-2 on January 25 and grades 3-5 on February 8. (Families may choose to remain in distance learning.)
- Additional synchronous learning at the secondary level and continued planning for return to in-person as current rates or state guidance allows.

Rationale for Model Change

- Current research supports in-person instruction for elementary instruction
 - [Center for Disease Control and Prevention Research](#)
 - [American Association of Pediatricians](#)
 - [New England Journal of Medicine](#)
 - [National Center for Research on Educational Access and Choice](#)
- Our current reality supports the need to move towards in-person instruction
 - No spread between students and staff
 - High demand for meeting the needs of our youngest learners
- The governor's guidance focuses on prioritizing in-person instruction for elementary students

Governor's New Guidance

The new state guidance is designed to prioritize in-person learning for the state's youngest students. Per the Governor's announcement:

- Schools play a critical role in the health, well-being, and education of Minnesota's children.
- Youngest kids are less susceptible to serious complications from COVID-19.
- We have learned how to reduce spread in schools from success in other settings.

[Recent research shared by the CDC](#) indicates that children who tested positive for COVID 19 were more likely to have attended gatherings such as weddings, parties and playdates and not as likely to have attended child care or school in-person.

2020-21 Return to Learn

According to the [new state guidelines](#), returning to full in-person learning at elementary requires a rolling start, with no more than 3 grade level bands added during a two-week period.

[Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan](#) requires 2 to 5 days for preparation and transition to a less restrictive model change. We would use three days, beginning after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday Monday January 18. Friday January 22 is semester break.

As per the state's Safe Learning Plan, our middle school and high school students must continue with distance learning, with exploration and planning for returning to in-person learning as conditions and guidance allow.

2020-21 Return to Learn

- 9/12 - 16.14
- 9/19 - 22.47
- 9/26 - 33.37
- 10/03 - 35.2
- 10/10 - 32.7
- 10/17 - 34.2
- 10/24 - 39.8
- 10/31 - 54.3
- 11/07 - 105
- 11/14 - 153.9
- 11/21 - 169.7
- 11/28 - 154.1
- 12/05 - 127.4
- 12/12 - 100.2
- 12/19 - 72.6
- 12/26 - 60.7
- 01/02 - 58.75

St. Louis County Bi-Weekly Case Rates for Secondary Schools

Policy Option	Range (14-day case rate per 10,000 people)
In-person learning for all students	0 to less than 10
Elementary in-person, Middle/high school hybrid	10 to less than 20
Both hybrid	20 to less than 30
Elementary hybrid, Middle/high school distance	30 to less than 50
Both distance	50 or more

COVID Coordinator Updates - Saliva Testing

- Initial order of 1400 saliva tests have been placed
- Initial testing sites will be 9 public elementary schools and 2 secondary sites
- Hours are still being determined
- Licensed School Nurses and Health Assistants will act as site coordinators
- 1st required testing date for the district is 1/27/20
- Testing is optional for staff but distinct is required to offer to all staff working in-person in the school buildings during in-person and hybrid learning.
 - This includes: bus drivers, child care and early learning program staff (including ECFE, ECSE, PreK, school readiness, and school-age care), child care or school-age care program staff who operate within the school building (whether operated by the district or run independently), community education staff, educators, nutrition staff, paraprofessionals, school and district administration/office staff, school nurses, service coop staff, and support staff such as social workers and guidance counselors.

COVID Coordinator Updates - Vaccinations

The vaccination for COVID-19 are rolling out from the Minnesota Department of Health in phases:

- Phase 1a, which has started, includes people working in health care settings who are at the highest risk for COVID-19 exposure and residents of long-term care facilities who have suffered serious disease outcomes, including death.
- School nurses are included in phase 1a and some have received their first vaccination.
- The second phase, phase 1b, includes people with certain jobs that don't allow them to work from home, putting them at higher risk for exposure to COVID-19, and are in essential industries. Phase 1B may also include people whose age puts them at higher risk for serious health complications if they contract COVID-19.
- Unfortunately, there is no projected date for when phase 1b will start.
- The MDH has created a [Vaccine Dashboard](#) that I encourage you to monitor.
- As soon as more information and potential dates are released, information will be sent out.

Learning Model Selection Update

- Total responses 3,521:
 - In-person - 2,924 (83%)
 - Distance Learning - 597 (17%)
- Of the total 3,521 responses:
 - 2,735 (78%) were previously in Hybrid
 - 768 (22%) previously in Distance Learning only

Current Class Sizes

- All in-person classes are under 30
- A majority are in the mid-20s
- Overall, primary grades have lower numbers
- Distance learning class are under 40
- Many DL sizes are in the mid-20s with a few smaller sections in the primary level

Substitute Teacher Needs

- We are working to hire one long-term substitute per elementary to provide additional support and ensure that needs are met
- These individuals will provide support at their home school, but could be called upon if district needs necessitated

Specialist Schedule

- Specialists are returning to building with no reductions
- Specialists are returning for in-person learning
- Specials will be taught to DL through a combination of licensed specialists and out of placement teachers being coached by licensed specialist

Special Education

Service model

- Birth - 2 will continue serving student in Distance Learning (DL)
- 3-5 age in community sites will continue DL, Duluth Preschool In-person
- K-2 start In-person January 25 or remain in DL
- Grades 3-5 DL until Feb 8th then return to school or remain in DL
- Secondary 12 -21 year old students -DL with targeted service support in Feb
- Return to learn implications do not change current CLP proposals
 - CLP models are In-person, Hybrid or Distance Learning
- When students are In-person the annual IEP recommendations are in place
 - Students are General Education Students first, the students IEP supports time to be included with peers and opportunities for separate instruction
- Push in and Pull out service is allowable
- Staffing of Elementary return to learn is looking very good.

Residential Updates

- Sites include Arrowhead, Chester, Merritt, Rockridge, and Superior academies.
- Sites fall under the same guidelines as Special Education services and are considered K-12.
- Saint Louis County Health Department recommended sites start back at the same level they were at.
- Special Education students return to Hybrid Service model

Tier 1 Childcare/KEY Zone Updates

- Tier 1 Lester Park and Lowell sites transitioning back to the middle schools as of Jan. 19
- Jan. 25-Feb. 5 continuing to serve Tier 1 grades 3-6 at middle schools
- As of Feb. 8 only serving Tier 1 6th grade students
- KEY Zone resumes in all elementary schools (K-2 Jan. 25/K-5 Feb. 8)

Facilities Updates

We are following the *most current CDC* guidelines, which was updated in January of 2021 for our procedures.

Highlights of CDC requirements:

- Disinfecting of common touch points 2x daily
- Multiple daily cleaning efforts of areas such as student desks and chairs - Accomplished with spray detergent and wiper cloths, or soap and water and microfiber rag
 - Help from teachers
 - Help from students
- End of day disinfecting using Victory Electrostatic Sprayers.

2020-21 Return to Learn

- Cafeteria table cleaning after each section - Accomplished with food service directed cleaning products/food safe products
 - Operations staff assists with these cleanings when there is a shortage of cafeteria monitors
 - End of day disinfecting of cafeteria tables using Victory Electrostatic sprayer
- **Most important information from the CDC, as related to cleaning for COVID:**
 - Cleaning physically removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects by using soap (or detergent) and water.
 - This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
 - Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects.
 - This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.
 - Clean surfaces and objects using soap and water prior to disinfection.

Supporting Fact for our Practices

Up to this point, in our District buildings, we have had zero student to student COVID transmission, and zero student to staff COVID transmission.

In summary, while enhanced protocols have been effective in mitigation, personal behaviors such as **handwashing**, **mask wearing** and **social distancing** remain the most effective tool in remaining COVID-free.

2020-21 Return to Learn

Principal Perspectives

Planning Period

- Elementary planning and preparation for a safe and productive return, January 19th-21st
- In-person and Distance will be paused due to scheduling and planning

Continued Stakeholder Communication and Collaboration

Voluntary Staff Meeting

Lifting Up COVID Safety - We Can

COVID safety is more important than ever, as local schools begin bringing students back to in-person learning and athletics and activities resume.

In a series of video messages and posters, members of the Duluth, Superior and Proctor school districts and others are encouraging citizens to continue to follow COVID safety guidelines to help our Northland communities.

More COVID Safety Tips: staysafe.mn.gov

Monitoring/Implementing State Guidance

- Tier 1B vaccinations announcement
- Additional interpretation of Safe Learning guidance
- Potential changes for secondary

Next Steps

- Continue planning for safe and successful return to in-person instruction
- Continue to monitor and implement quickly changing state and local guidance
- Continue communication and collaboration with all stakeholders