



Minnetonka Public Schools

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Dear Families,

I hope you are all doing well. We have now completed a month of school, and things have gone well for most of our students. We have received great cooperation from families, as we strive to keep everyone at school safe.

When the School Board adopted the District's Safe Learning Plan in August, it committed to everyone that there would be a review of the plan and how well things were going at the October 7 board meeting. Last night, the School Board reviewed the Plan, and it determined that no changes would be made to the Plan at this time. There will be another review of the conditions that exist by the November 4 board meeting.

An important part of the review last night was a COVID-19 update from our Health Services Director, Annie Lumbar Bendson. Ms. Lumbar Bendson shared the current COVID-19 active and recovered case numbers of [students](#) and [staff](#), as well as the number of those quarantining. Weekly information is available on the [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) on the District's website.

She shared that currently there are 29 active student cases of COVID-19 and six active staff cases, and there are 130 students quarantining and 14 staff quarantining. The cases are spread out across schools. She also shared the vaccination rates in Minnetonka: 74.5% of our MHS students are fully vaccinated, 70.2% of eligible students at MME are fully vaccinated and 63.6% of eligible students at MMW are fully vaccinated. In her [presentation](#), Ms. Lumbar Bendson said that through contact tracing it is clear the majority of exposures to COVID are coming from within the home. There have been almost no transmissions at school.

[One important table](#) that was presented last night shows the comparisons of all Minnesota school districts on a continuum from the lowest incidences on the left to the most incidences on the right. Minnetonka is on the far left, where you see a black marking on the graph, showing that it has one of the lowest incidences of COVID-19 among all districts.

Dr. Amy LaDue, our Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, provided more details on how instruction will be maintained when a student is home ill due to COVID-19 or when they were a close contact to a COVID-19-positive person. She explained that when a student is home quarantining, the student's teachers are expected to create a learning plan that best suits the student's needs and is the best fit for what is being taught. This

may include live-streaming options, now that the District and the teacher's union have reached an agreement regarding streaming, and other instructional options.

The School Board reviewed four possible options regarding masks. They were: (1) to continue with current masking and quarantining expectations at all levels, (2) to implement my original recommendation to have masks recommended for all students and staff, and to modify the quarantining to fit the mask requirement of this option, (3) to continue the Grades 9-12 recommendation for masks and to change to the same expectation in place for high school students for all other students 35 days after the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine for students who are five years old or older, and (4) to continue the current masking recommendation for students and staff in Grades 9-12 and the current masking requirement for students and staff in Grades pre-K-5, and to change the masking expectation for students and staff in Grades 6-8 so that masks become a recommendation instead of a requirement.

The Board considered each option, weighing the opportunities and the challenges that each option may present. They talked through the data presented by Ms. Lumbar Bendson and Dr. LaDue, the feedback they've received from parents and students and the information about when the vaccine may be available to students as young as five years old.

The Board's decision, in the end, was to have the [Safe Learning Plan](#) remain as is, for now, and to revisit it at the Board's upcoming meeting in November, at which time it is expected that more information about vaccines for children will be known.

Thank you to those who have submitted suggestions, concerns and questions regarding the District's Safe Learning Plan. We will continue to keep you apprised of any changes to it.

Dennis Peterson
Superintendent of Schools