

Dear Parents and Students,

Over the past few days, with the rising COVID cases in Minnetonka and in our surrounding communities, and with the challenges we now face daily in staffing due to quarantines and illness outside of school, it has become increasingly apparent we need to make a change in our learning model. Despite all we are doing to keep school as safe as possible and to deliver high quality instruction, we will need to transition to full e-learning for all grades until things improve.

CHILDCARE SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES DURING E-LEARNING

We want to support students and families who will struggle with this change. We know how difficult this will be for some students who do not function well with e-learning and for some families who are not able to have their children home during the day, and we are working to provide a low-cost, school-day childcare option in the schools for those who really need this support. Transportation will be provided. Social distancing and face coverings will, of course, be required. We will limit this option based on available staff.

If you were to choose this option, your K-8 student(s) would still be e-learning, but they would be e-learning in a school building under the supervision of a paraprofessional rather than from home. Instructions of how to sign up for “K-8 in-school childcare for e-learning” will be sent in a separate email to parents. Additionally, we will continue to have Explorers childcare before and after school for our E-5 families and during the school day for essential workers.

Here is our plan for the transition to e-learning:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Elementary students will be in school next week on Monday, November 23 and Tuesday, November 24. There will be no school for any of our elementary students (including current e-learning students) on Wednesday, November 25; Monday, November 30; and Tuesday, December 1, as these will be planning days for our elementary teachers to prepare to move all students to e-learning. Elementary students will begin e-learning on Wednesday, December 2.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school students will be in school next week, with SKIPPERS on Monday, November 23 and TONKA on Tuesday, November 24 and both groups e-learning on Wednesday, November 25. They will all move to full e-learning beginning on Wednesday, December 2. There will be no school for middle school students on Monday, November 30 and Tuesday, December 1, as those will be planning days for middle school teachers to make the transition to full e-learning.

HIGH SCHOOL

The high school will transition immediately to full e-learning with no students coming to school for Skipper Wednesdays.

Principals will all have more specific details for families, so watch for that communication.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

We will provide some in-school special education services during this time, based on criteria set forth in the Governor’s Executive Order and on students’ IEPs and identified needs. If your child receives special education services, please watch for a communication from Executive Director of Special Education, Christine Breen, which will outline more specific information.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Minnetonka Preschool, ECFE, ECSE and Junior Explorers will continue in-person. Preschool, ECFE, ECSE staff will be preparing and planning on Wednesday, November 25 and Monday, November 30. Therefore, there will be no programming for those programs on those two days, other than the Minnetonka Preschool e-learning class which will continue without interruption. Junior Explorers will also continue without interruption. Parents should check with Explorers registration to see if they can be included, pending space, on these two days.

Explorers for Grades K-5 will be open before and after school on all days, as well as full-day care on Wednesday, November 25; Monday, November 30; and Tuesday, December 1 - provided your child is registered for Explorers. MCE after-school and evening youth and adult programming will continue in-person as scheduled at this time.

ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

We will look to the Governor's guidelines regarding school athletics and activities. If there are changes to those areas from what we are doing now, we will share that information with those impacted.

I know this is not the message many of you wanted. It is not the message I ever wanted to send to you. We have worked so hard to keep COVID out of the schools, and while we have been successful at preventing the spread of COVID within our schools, we have not been able to prevent the spread in the broader community.

I am very proud of our teachers, staff and administrators for all they have done to provide exceptional educational opportunities to our students this fall. We will all work hard to ensure that the level of rigor and excellence does not falter, as we move to the e-learning model. Additionally, we know how critical it is to support students' mental health, and the District will continue to share information about resources available to support students in this area.

At this time, I expect we will either return to the hybrid models on January 4, following the winter break, or we will decide that e-learning has to continue longer into January. We will monitor the situation and will update you with as much notice as possible if that date needs to change.

Thank you for all of the support you have given your students and our staff and teachers throughout this fall. I know this has been a challenging time for each of us. I appreciate your continued commitment to your child's education and to our school district.

Dennis Peterson
Superintendent of Schools