

## ST. ANTHONY NEW BRIGHTON MEMORANDUM

**TO:** ISD 282 SCHOOL BOARD

**FROM:** RENEE CORNEILLE, SUPERINTENDENT

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

**DATE:** AUGUST 24, 2021

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Hennepin and Ramsey counties are classified as high-transmission by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and are in the red zone<sup>1</sup>. Rates are increasing, but not "racing"(as we experienced in 2020 and early 2021). Among unvaccinated younger kids and those school-aged youth who are eligible for the vaccine, transmission rates are growing rapidly. The Delta variant is more transmissible and more serious when contracted. Yet, infections are only happening in a small proportion of those who are vaccinated. There is evidence that fully vaccinated people can spread it to others, but the vaccines are staying true to what they promised (preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death).

Our school is nestled within a very concerning situation and has unique advantages that we can leverage for the school year, most notably, exceptional vaccine rates. ISD 282 should expect changes to public health guidance during the year. These changes will have an impact on what school looks like, for example recently the CDC changed the definition of a "[close contact](#)" - this new definition will eliminate *large* scale quarantine, **as long as masks are worn**.

The following are the vaccination rates for ISD 282 students as of 8/5/2021:

GRADE	% FULLY VACCINATED	% AT LEAST 1 SHOT
7TH	57%	65%
8TH	73%	82%
9TH	63%	71%

10TH	76%	80%
11TH	75%	78%
12TH	76%	79%

Last year ISD282 had an estimated 95% vaccination rate for staff. With changes in staffing over the summer, we will be implementing a voluntary-anonymous survey of staff seeking vaccination status for the 2021-22 school year. We are also working with MDE and MDH to participate in the weekly COVID-19 testing - similar to what we implemented last school year. If this becomes available, ISD 282 will implement testing.

Below are the following recommendations supported by the Local Incident Team (LIT) for ISD282. As a reminder the purpose of LIT is to evaluate CDC, MDH, and MDE guidelines, as well as local COVID data, to make informed decisions regarding mitigation strategies. The following people make up the team:

- Laura Oksnevad, RN, School Board Chair (SAMS parent)
- Dr. Cassandra Palmer, School Board Vice Chair (SAVHS parent)
- Dr. Renee Corneille, Superintendent (Wilshire Park and SAMS parent)
- Lori Watzl-King, RN, District Wellness Coordinator
- Hope Fagerland, Director of Student Services
- Phan Tu, Director of Finance and Operations
- Wendy Webster, Community Services and Communications Director (SAMS/SAVHS parent)
- Nancy Terry, Wilshire Park Special Education Speech Language Pathologist (SAMS parent)
- Traci Adams, Middle School Administrative Assistant
- Janet Kimmel, Communication Coordinator
- Mark Gibbs, District Engineer
- Stefan Gingerich, Epidemiologist (Wilshire Park parent)
- Mageen Caines, Epidemiologist (Wilshire Park and SAMS parent)
- Jackie Weber, Public Health Expert (Wilshire Park parent)
- Linda Amundsen, Food Service Cook Manager
- Maria Roberts, Principal at Wilshire Park Elementary School
- Amy Kujawski, Principal at St. Anthony Middle School (Wilshire Park parent)
- Andrew Hodges, Interim-Principal at St. Anthony Village High School
- Brady Krueger, Dean of Students at St. Anthony Village High School

The goal of ISD282, especially during this global pandemic (created by COVID-19) is to ensure high levels of *in-person learning* in the safest way possible. To allow for in-person learning

without unfortunate interruptions (classroom closures, school closures, extended quarantine periods) the following recommendations should be implemented within our school district.

- **Masks**: *Universal* required cloth mask wearing in school buildings for all students ages two and older and staff, regardless of vaccination status. Masks should be well-fitting without valves. Neck gaiters are not adequate.
- **Physical Distancing (Cohorts/pods)**: During the 2020-21 school year, cohorts/pods were created as a mitigation strategy. This strategy limited the educational experience for students during the school day and required a shortened school day. Based on universal cloth mask wearing, along with heightened symptom awareness, we recommend for schools to operate without cohorts/pods. Physical distancing/cohorts/pods
- **Classroom/School Closures and Quarantines**: Universal cloth mask wearing prevents the need to shut down classrooms or extended quarantines. CDC states that as long as individuals are wearing masks, schools are not required to implement classroom quarantines and/or shut down of classrooms. Limited quarantines may be required for unvaccinated people if the exposure occurs when unmasked (i.e. lunch, sports). Shortened quarantine options will be available as long as the exposure is not within the household. Household quarantines for unvaccinated people is 14 days.
- **Visitors**: Visitors will be limited to only essential services during the school day. Thoughtful consideration will be required to ensure the safety of staff and families during Open House/Back to School nights. Communication will be shared with families prior and during the events to limit their time in the building, open all doors, one parent/guardian per child, etc...
- **Lunch**: Mask wearing is not possible during breakfast and lunch times. The following accommodations will be provided during these times:
  - Hand sanitizing upon entering/leaving
  - Wearing masks when entering the lunchroom until seated and when finished eating.
  - Grades 1-5 classrooms will come as a class together and exit together as a class.
  - Encourage eating outside when the weather is agreeable.
  - Middle/High School lunchroom table documentation for contact tracing.
  - Elementary - seating charts.
  - Direct instruction to students regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategy protocols
  - At the High/Middle school Breakfast carts will be in the hallway and staff will hand out breakfast to students as they walk into the Commons Area
- **Transportation on Vans/Buses**: Masks are required on all buses/vans per federal law.

- **Ventilation System:** ISD 282 has implemented a top-of-the-line ventilation system in its school buildings. ISD 282 has raised the outside air intakes above the required minimums by 25% or greater. In addition, school filters have been upgraded to a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) 14 - The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers suggests a MERV 13 or greater to combat the COVID-19 virus.
- **Contract Tracing:** If all people are masked, the school district will notify staff and students of a COVID-19 positive exposure. Recommendations will be provided to take a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after exposure and to continue masking.
- **Lockers and Locker Rooms:** Students will be masked so use of lockers and the locker room are permitted.
- **Cleaning and Sanitizing:** Students will have hand washing breaks throughout the day (K-5) and all students will have access to hand sanitizer. Custodial staff will clean and disinfect surfaces in each room at the end of each day.

It is clear that COVID-19 and the pandemic is an ever changing and evolving situation. I am confident in the Local Incident Team, district administration, and school board to monitor the virus and the updates in the science to determine the most safe and effective measures for our students and staff.

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**Table 1. CDC Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19<sup>1</sup>**

Indicator	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days <sup>2</sup>	0-9	10-49	50-99	≥100
Percentage of NAATs that are positive during the past 7 days <sup>3</sup>	<5.0%	5.0%-7.9%	8.0%-9.9%	≥10.0%

<sup>1</sup>If the two indicators suggest different levels, the actions corresponding to the higher threshold should be chosen. County-level data on total new cases in the past 7 days and test percent positivity are available on the County View tab in [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#).

<sup>2</sup>Total number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 7 days is calculated by adding the number of new cases in the county (or other community type) in the last 7 days divided by the population in the county (or other community type) and multiplying by 100,000.

<sup>3</sup>Percentage of positive diagnostic and screening NAATs during the last 7 days is calculated by dividing the number of positive tests in the county (or other administrative level) during the last 7 days by the total number of tests resulted over the last 7 days. Additional information can be found on the [Calculating Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\) Laboratory Test Percent Positivity: CDC Methods and Considerations for Comparisons and Interpretation](#) webpage.

## Health and Safety Measures for the 2021-2022 School Year

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes Section 123B.09 vests the care, management, and control of independent districts in the school board; and

**WHEREAS**, the Superintendent of Independent School District 282 [hereinafter the “Superintendent”] is responsible for the management of the schools, the administration of all School District policies, and is directly accountable to the School Board; and

**WHEREAS**, when responsibilities are not specifically prescribed nor School District policy applicable, the Superintendent shall use personal and professional judgment, subject to review by the School Board, pursuant to School District Policy 302, *Superintendent*; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) and the Minnesota Department of Health (“MDH”) have determined that the COVID-19 pandemic is currently ongoing and may remain ongoing for an unknown time; and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Department of Education (“MDE”) has issued and may continue to issue written guidance for Minnesota schools on educational issues related to COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the MDH has issued and may continue to issue written guidance for Minnesota schools on public health issues related to COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the Superintendent and the administration of the School District have conferred with the School Board regarding COVID-19 health and safety measures, the current CDC, MDE, and MDH requirements for each, and other relevant information; and

**WHEREAS**, based upon the collective consideration of these factors, the Superintendent has recommended to the School Board that

**Masks:** *Universal* required cloth mask wearing in school buildings for all students ages two and older and staff, regardless of vaccination status. Masks should be well-fitting without valves. Neck gaiters are not adequate.

**Physical Distancing (Cohorts/pods):** During the 2020-21 school year, cohorts/pods were created as a mitigation strategy. This strategy limited the educational experience for students during the school day and required a shortened school day. Based on universal cloth mask wearing, along with heightened symptom awareness, schools can operate without cohorts/pods.

**Classroom/School Closures and Quarantines:** Universal cloth mask wearing prevents the need to shut down classrooms or extended quarantines. CDC states that as long as individuals are wearing masks, schools are not required to implement classroom quarantines and/or shut down of classrooms. Limited quarantines may be required for unvaccinated people if the exposure occurs when unmasked (i.e. lunch, sports). Shortened quarantine options will be

available as long as the exposure is not within the household. Household quarantines for unvaccinated people is 14 days.

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be implemented at the commencement of the 2021-2022 school year.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the School Board of Independent School District No. 282 as follows:

Section 1: The Superintendent is hereby directed to implement the above mentioned health and safety measures to open the 2021-2022 school year.

Section 2: The Superintendent is hereby authorized, after consultation with the School Board Chair and notification to the School Board, to select and implement different health and safety measures for the School District or any specific school buildings without School Board action if the Superintendent reasonably believes that prompt implementation of different health and safety measures is necessary, and that constraints of time and public health considerations render it impractical to hold a School Board meeting to approve the implementation. The health and safety measures selected and implemented by the Superintendent shall continue in effect unless and until the School Board, in consultation with the Superintendent and appropriate school district staff and public health officials, deems it in the best interest of the School District and its students to implement different health and safety measures.

Section 3: The School Board will ratify the updated health and safety measures at the next regular school board meeting.

Section 4: The Superintendent will provide regular updates to the School Board regarding the School District's efforts to implement COVID-19 related educational and public health guidance issued by the MDE and the MDH, respectively.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

Roll Call Vote

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School Board Chair

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School Board Clerk