



2020 – 21: Manitowoc Public School District

LEADING WITH LEARNING

INSPIRING EDUCATION. EMPOWERING COMMUNITY. UNLEASHING POTENTIAL.

July 28, 2020

Dear MPSD Families,

We are excited to announce that we plan to start the 2020-2021 school year with a **blended learning** model that will provide students the benefits of some face-to-face instruction and social interaction, along with some distance learning time that will reduce the number of students in the building to allow for social distancing. Any families who do not feel comfortable returning to face-to-face learning can instead choose **full distance learning** to continue learning from home during the pandemic. Full distance learning would be similar to what was offered in spring; however, we expect to make changes in attendance, grading and teacher instruction.

Our Board of Education unanimously approved the plan in a meeting today. **Details about these two learning models are included in [this slideshow presentation](#) and in an overview of [blended learning by building](#).**

We will be providing more information and answering questions from last week's listening sessions in a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to be shared later this week. On Friday the district will send families a form to sign up for their preferred learning model. We would like that form completed by August 7 to give our schools and staff time to prepare for the start of school.

Above all else, we want you to know that MPSD cares deeply about our students, our families and our community - and we are committed to do all we can to keep you safe and healthy. We are committed to a "people first" mindset, equity for all, a focus on learning, data-driven decision-making and collaboration.

Our goal remains to return to 100% face-to-face learning because we know that is the best for our students. But we will not do that until we are confident that we can safely protect our staff and students. We are working with health officials to set criteria on when we could expand (or restrict) our face-to-face learning throughout the school year, based on conditions in our community. We all can help by doing our part to stem the community spread. This will get better and we are excited for the day when all of our students can safely return to school and be with their teachers and friends.

How we reached this decision

On March 13 when Gov. Tony Evers ordered all Wisconsin schools closed, we hoped our students might be able to return before the end of the school year - or certainly by the following fall.



But as our return to school planning team worked on 2020-2021 plans, we have seen local COVID-19 cases rise. We surveyed our students, families and staff and reviewed questions and comments from listening sessions and a [feedback form](#). Our planning team members have spent countless hours researching and preparing how to best provide a high-quality, relevant and engaging education for our students without endangering anyone's health and safety.

The results: we have ruled out a return at the start of the school year to 100% face-to-face, 5-day traditional learning, due to local COVID-19 activity and other information provided by local, county and state health officials and nurses. The complexity of safely distancing our 5,200 students and 800 staff members in our schools is too great. **To safely hold any in-person learning, we need to reduce the number of students in our buildings at any given time - essentially cutting class sizes in half to a maximum of about 10-12 students. Therefore we will offer families two models to start the 2020-2021 school year: blended learning and full distance learning.**

BLENDED LEARNING would mean students would return to their schools for limited hours to learn in person with teachers and fellow classmates - and spend other time learning from home. The specific hours and days would be different depending on grade level: two half-days per week for 4K, four half-days per week for elementary students, one full-day per week for middle school and two half-days per week for high school students. We would do our best to match those days and times for family members.

FULL DISTANCE LEARNING would mean students would learn remotely from home, using district-provided Chromebooks to access teacher-created lessons in Google Classroom, as well as scheduled screen time with teachers as a class or individual one-on-one support. This distance learning would be similar to what we pivoted to offer in spring but likely differ in attendance and grading policies and teacher connections.

Regardless of the model families choose, MPSD will be focused on **LEADING WITH LEARNING**. We are excited about reconnecting with your students in fall. We hope you and your families are finding ways to relax and enjoy your summer. Keep reading and we will see you soon!



Mark Holzman
Superintendent, Manitowoc Public School District
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