



# Brainerd Public Schools

*Opportunity. Innovation. Success.*

July 20, 2020

Dear Brainerd Warriors,

We hope you are having a nice and restful summer as we acknowledge that the end of last school year was a challenging time for all of us due to COVID-19. Please know that our first priority is the safety, health and well-being of our students, staff and community. As we await the guidance on how we will begin the 2020-21 school year, we wanted to reach out to you to provide some interim information.

In June 2020, Cathryn Ricker, Minnesota Commissioner of Education, directed all MN school districts to develop three different models that may be implemented at any time during the 2020-2021 school year. These adaptable models include: Distance Learning; a Hybrid Model and full on-site education. District administration has created a framework for each model based on the federal and state guidance and will meet with union leadership and key stakeholders when Governor Walz announces how Minnesota districts should plan to re-open. We will hear from state leadership by July 27, 2020. The expertise of all employee groups is needed to create a successful educational environment (whether distance or in-person) during the next school year.

As we move toward all employees returning to work onsite in August, safety will be of the utmost importance. We continuously monitor the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on a continuous basis to keep abreast of the latest information regarding the transmission of COVID-19, the most effective safety measures, and best practices during this pandemic.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued information related to International and domestic travel and guidance regarding conditions that pose an increased risk for severe illness if an individual contracts COVID-19. Individuals travelling internationally are to quarantine for a period of 14 days upon return to the United States. Domestic travel quarantines are determined by the Department of Health for each state. Minnesota has not established any quarantine period for domestic travelers at this point in time. We will continue to monitor as the situation evolves.

The list of conditions that the CDC reports to have an increased risk for severe illness if an individual contracts COVID-19 includes:

- Older adults (risk increases as you get older, the greatest risk is individuals 85 years old or older)
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

The CDC has advised additional underlying medical conditions that “might” impose greater risk; this list can be accessed via the website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Please reach out to your healthcare provider for information about your

situation or you can utilize the free resource, Grand Rounds, by calling them at 1-800-929-0926 or online at [www.groundrounds.com/brainerd](http://www.groundrounds.com/brainerd).

If you have a concern regarding returning to onsite work due to your own vulnerability to the virus and have a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you are able to request a reasonable accommodation. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants or employees. A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable an applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions.

Brainerd Public Schools will assist you through an interactive process to establish any needed accommodations. This will include a discussion about the nature and severity of the disability with input from your healthcare provider, a review of the essential functions of the current position and explore potential accommodations. All requests for accommodation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Remote work will only be considered if the essential functions of the position can be completed offsite and impact to the operations are minimally affected. **Effective August 15, 2020, all employees will be required to report to onsite work during all scheduled hours unless otherwise approved through Human Resources.**

In addition to the impact to physical health, the pandemic also brings mental health challenges. Brainerd Public Schools offers an Employee Assistance Program for their employees and families. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help with almost any issue. EAP benefits are available to all employees and their families at NO COST to you. Help is just a phone call away. The EAP offers confidential advice, support and practical solutions to real-life issues, from 24-hour crisis help to financial and legal services to work-life balance support. You can access these confidential services by calling the toll-free number at 1-866-451-5465 or by visiting online at [www.niseap.com](http://www.niseap.com). Take care of yourself by considering the additional guidance below:

- Prepare yourself for a period of time of uncertainty and for many changes in the coming weeks.
- Be kind to yourself and others around you. Be flexible and adaptable.
- Stay calm and get plenty of rest. Take care of yourself physically, emotionally and mentally.
- Refer to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov) for valid information about the virus and health recommendations.
- Contact your medical provider with questions or concerns about your health.
- Communicate regularly with your supervisor.

A more comprehensive district preparedness plan will be finalized, distributed and components trained as we move toward school resuming in the Fall. Thank you for all you have done to make this District great! Stay safe and well!

Sincerely,



Angie Bennett  
Human Resources Director  
Brainerd Public Schools - ISD 181



Laine D. Larson  
Superintendent  
Brainerd Public Schools - ISD 181

District Mission Statement: Independent School District 181, in partnership with the community, will ensure all students achieve their individual potential by providing the highest-quality programs and resources to prepare learners for an ever-changing global society.