



Brainerd Public Schools

Opportunity. Innovation. Success.

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July 31, 2020

Dear Warrior Family,

Yesterday, Governor Walz and MN Education Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker unveiled Minnesota’s “Safe Learning Plan” for opening the 2020-21 school year amidst the COVID-19 global pandemic. This plan provides a framework for each Minnesota public school district to implement the appropriate approach to the beginning of the school year, whether it be all students on site, distance learning or through a hybrid model.

Earlier this summer, school districts were asked to develop plans for all three learning models in preparation for a safe return to the upcoming school year. Brainerd Public Schools district leaders embraced this directive and responded accordingly with potential and viable scenarios that will be modified and presented to the Board of Education and the Brainerd school community, next week. Our model plans align with the expectations set forth.

On July 30, 2020, Minnesotans were updated on the extensive planning that has been completed at the state level regarding the three learning models. The MN Safe Learning Plan is a localized, data-driven plan focused on science while encouraging a safe learning environment for all. This plan focuses on the following five goals:

1. Prioritizing the safety of students and staff;
2. Prioritizing in-person learning, especially for younger learners and those with most need;
3. Recognizing differences in potential spread among different ages;
4. Supporting planning, while permitting flexibility for districts; and
5. Taking into account disease prevalence at a local/county level.

Community members and school leaders were informed that each district’s plan for opening school will be shaped by data from a recent 14-day, county-level coronavirus case rate. Individual schools must be prepared to adjust their learning model throughout the school year as the COVID-19 situation further develops. The district’s range score on the following chart is a baseline for helping us determine the policy option we will follow to begin the school year. As we get closer to school start, we will identify our 14-day range score for Brainerd Public Schools.

Recommended policy options based on 14-day case rate range

Policy Option	Range (14-day case rate per 10,000 people)
In-person learning for all students	0 to less than 10
Elementary in-person, Middle/high school hybrid	10 to less than 20
Both hybrid	20 to less than 30
Elementary hybrid, Middle/high school distance	30 to less than 50
Both distance	50 or more

Next week, district leadership will share the Brainerd Public Schools proposal for each policy option, including provisions for logistics such as transportation, food service, and child care needs. This proposal has been shaped by input from the over 3,200 parents who took the survey over the last week.

On Thursday, August 6, 2020 at 11 a.m., the Board of Education will hold a Special School Board Meeting to hear the details of the proposals but no decisions will be made at that time. Information gathering and discussion will take place at this special meeting. Decisions that require board approval will be recommended at the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education on Monday, August 10, 2020. Please be reminded that Board of Education meetings are streamed on Brainerd Public Schools' YouTube channel. Public input for board review should be sent to communications@isd181.org prior to the meetings.

During August, families will need to let the School District know the enrollment, transportation, learning model and logistic choices for each of their children, so the district can accurately plan for the year. In addition to the all students in-person model (which we will be prepared to transition to the hybrid or distance learning models depending on the 14-day case rate range score), Minnesota's "Safe Learning Plan for 2020-21" requires school district to provide families with the choice of "an equitable distance learning model to all families who choose not to attend in-person learning." More details on how to provide this information will be shared soon.

As stated below in our District's Mission Statement, we are partners in this process. Jointly, we have a responsibility to do our part to ensure the safety and health of our students, staff and our entire community. It is our goal to have as many students on-site, with their teachers, as possible. To make this a reality, together we will all need to implement science-based strategies to help control the number of COVID-19 cases in our region: wearing face coverings when indoors; practicing social distancing; regularly cleaning work and learning environments; washing our hands; staying home when sick and following MDH and CDC guidelines.

Brainerd Public Schools will continue to keep you informed as decisions are made towards the start of our next exciting school year. Our schools and community will work together to keep everyone safe and healthy while pursuing educational excellence for all learners; because, we can't wait to have our students and staff back together!! It is the Warrior Way!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laine D. Larson".

Laine D. Larson, Superintendent
Brainerd Public Schools - ISD 181

District Mission Statement: ISD 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.