



August 20, 2021

Dear Parents,

As we continue to prepare for the upcoming school year, we wanted to give you an update as it relates to Covid and an update to our facilities project.

First of all, the Back to Learn plan on our website is incorrect. We have been working closely with the Berrien County Health Department and County Superintendents and realized that the data we were collecting put us in the “red” area of our plan; yet our health care systems are not being overwhelmed. While there are some people in the hospital due to Covid, there is no one in the ICU with Covid. Under this plan the “red” category meant we were shutting down and going virtual. We are NOT doing this.

Together with the Berrien County Health Department, we decided to use the weekly numbers and % of positive cases AND what’s happening with our health care systems before talking about shutting down schools. Therefore, the orange and red columns of our Back to Learn plan have been changed. We will still be in school but we are strongly recommending masks. In addition, we will be cleaning in the same manner as we did in the spring, hand sanitizer will be available, we will be spacing children at least 3 feet apart where we can. If we see cases of Covid in our buildings or classrooms, we may move to masks being worn in heavily congested areas such as hallway passing. At Monday night’s Board Meeting, I will be reviewing the plan with the Board and the new plan will be posted on Tuesday.

We also want you to know that as of today we learned that the MDHHS is starting conversations about a state mask mandate. Should that happen, we will have to follow this mandate as they will be following Michigan Law. We will let you know if this happens.

In the meantime, our goal (and yours) is to keep our students safe and healthy and to provide a school environment that is rich in learning and a place where our students want to be. Let’s work together to instill in them proper hand washing and hygiene practices, sneezing into elbows, and asking them to let us know if they feel ill.

On another note, our Steering Committee came together this week to see a draft of what the school layout would look like as a K-12 building. This was a very exciting meeting with about 20 members of our community in attendance. We were able to see a 3 Dimensional view of what the outside of the building would look like, and we were able to look at a rendering of what the floor plan would entail. See below.



The green area of this floor plan would be the new elementary school which would house the K-5. This took a lot of discussion to make sure that we had enough spaces for everyone and if the population grew, we would still be able to accommodate new staff and students.

Our next step is to now have a draft budget developed to make sure we can afford doing this project at no additional cost to our taxpayers. Once that is done we will move into what is called a Design Development phase where more detail will be added to the plan.

Last but not least, our bus routes were posted on the website today.

Stay tuned!

Mustangs are Moving Forward!

Dr. Andrea van der Laan  
Interim Superintendent