

## **School District of New Berlin's Board of Education Supports Local Control for Opening, Closing of Schools**

*The SDNB's Goal is to Open 2020-21 School Year In-Person With Virtual Option*

New Berlin, Wis. – With the school year quickly approaching, the School District of New Berlin's Board of Education approved a resolution in support of local government control related to school openings and closings amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution was passed Monday, Aug. 24.

The SDNB's administration, with the support of the School Board and in conjunction with Waukesha County's "Stay Safe to Stay Open" campaign, has been working all summer toward a full in-person return to school this fall coupled with a full distance learning, or virtual, option for those families that choose or need it. The district also continues to investigate long-term hybrid models (typically a week of instruction split into in-person and virtual) and will begin the school year with two weeks of the hybrid instructional model for all students.

The resolution states that "local governing authorities know best how to meet the needs of their school districts and a statewide closure of schools provides no flexibility for local school districts to meet the needs of its students."

Last spring, the SDNB and all other K-12 schools and school districts were closed by Gov. Tony Evers temporarily March 18, before being permanently closed April 16. The resolution urges Gov. Evers to respect local governing authority to manage school closings if and when necessary.

"The resolution shows support for all the parents who want in-person learning and the administration, task force, and task force subcommittees that are doing all the hard work to make this possible," said Janet Schulz, School Board vice-president and the resolution's author. "The resolution recognizes that individual districts need the ability to be flexible. A statewide closing of schools does not allow for any flexibility whatsoever. What happened this spring did not allow for any students to come onto school grounds even in a limited capacity for instruction that could not effectively be done through a virtual model alone."

In planning for the start of the school year, the SDNB has implemented several new health and safety measures. In addition to complying with the state mandate that all students, staff and visitors will be required to wear masks or facial coverings while in the schools or adjacent indoor facilities, the district has also ordered and will install plexiglass partitions to be used throughout the buildings, designated certain hallways as one-way, restructured common school-day functions like lunch and recess, replaced water fountains with bottle refill stations and much more.

"We've been very transparent and realistic with our families about our inability to guarantee that none of our students or staff will contract COVID-19 this school year, but a majority of our families want their children learning in our schools this fall," Superintendent Joe Garza said. "We're working toward that goal using the resources we have available and we are working hard to make our learning environments as safe as possible given the circumstances."

"We remain appreciative of our families' and our community's support and understanding of the need to be flexible during what will no doubt be a unique school year."

To read the entire resolution, [click here](http://www.nbexcellence.org/district/reopening-schools-2020-21.cfm). For more information about the SDNB's school reopening efforts, visit [www.nbexcellence.org/district/reopening-schools-2020-21.cfm](http://www.nbexcellence.org/district/reopening-schools-2020-21.cfm).