

Nov. 11, 2020



Good afternoon families and staff,

For the last several months, all of us at the School District of New Berlin have worked hard to keep our schools open during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have implemented several safety measures, altered our schedules, conducted extensive contact tracing and monitored daily data and information all as means to help mitigate the spread of the virus and keep our students, staff and families as safe as possible.

Throughout the process, our Pandemic Response Team has been working with Waukesha County and the Waukesha County Health Department and consulting neighboring school districts. As of today, our district has been fortunate. Whereas other County schools have been forced into an all-virtual instructional model, we have avoided the need to do so. Likewise, other districts chose to start in a hybrid model with the hopes of transitioning to a full in-person option and have been unable to do so.

Yes, we have had confirmed student and staff cases of COVID-19 and quarantines - all of which have been reported on [our COVID-19 dashboard](#) - but we have not yet been put in a position to consider a school or schools because of, or to prevent, an outbreak.

That said, the number of confirmed positive cases is near 400 per day countywide, and the County health experts expect that number to continue to increase through the holiday season. Waukesha County, [as outlined in this letter](#), is not able to keep up with contact tracing and must change how it conducts contact tracing. In summary, the County will no longer:

- contact close contacts outside of the household;
- contact close contacts identified in school;
- contact schools to let them know if a parent has tested positive; they are relying on families to do this.

What does this mean for the SDNB? We continue to need your help to mitigate the spread of the virus and to keep our schools open. If the district is not made aware of confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a student's household, we may not be able to conduct our own effective contact tracing and notify close contacts in a timely fashion. The inability to do so could cause entire classrooms, schools or even the district to shift to virtual learning as a means to control the spread of the disease and keep all of our stakeholders safe.

While our goal continues to be to keep our schools open, the district is prepared to pivot to a full virtual learning model for all students should we need to, or be instructed to by the state. We encourage all of our families to be prepared for this as well. We know such a transition would be difficult for many of you, but we ask that you continue to consider how you can best make that scenario work for you and your student(s).

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Sincerely,

Joe Garza, Superintendent