

Sept. 2, 2020



Good afternoon families,

We are less than a week away from the start of the school year and like many of you, I'm moving forward with cautious optimism with a lot of unknowns related to COVID-19 on the horizon.

Despite months of planning and preparation to both create the safest learning environments possible for those who have chosen in-person learning for their students and the most robust learning opportunities for both our in-person and virtual learners, I realize many of you still may be winding down the summer with a feeling of trepidation. As a parent - and as the superintendent of the School District of New Berlin - I'd be lying if I said I didn't share some of your concerns.

That said, I am excited to see our staff and students back in our schools for the first time since March, and I am confident that our distance learning will simply be better than it was during our emergency closures in the spring.

With that, I want to welcome you to the 2020-21 school year and provide a few important updates regarding the reopening of our schools.

Transportation Update

Many families have reached out to their school, district office and / or Durham Student Services regarding transportation information for their student(s). As of this morning, pick-up and drop-off times and locations were not yet available in the transportation tab in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. On behalf of Durham, we apologize for the delay, which is the result of a routing software issue Durham is experiencing.

According to Durham, bus routing information will be available in Infinite Campus in the next 24 hours. If you have requested busing and you do not see routing information, or have other questions regarding transportation, please contact Durham at (262) 784-7278.

Self-Monitoring Your Student(s)

We want to remind all families that we need your help when it comes to monitoring your child's symptoms during the pandemic. Our staff is relying on you to give your child(ren) temperature checks and to only send your child to school when he or she is fever-free and is not presenting COVID-19 symptoms, which include, but are not limited to, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath and diarrhea.

If your child is not well, presents any COVID-19 symptoms that cannot be attributed to another illness, or has a fever (>100 degrees), please keep your child home and call your school's attendance line.



Waukesha County COVID-19 Dashboard

As we shared with the School Board late last month, Waukesha County has updated its [COVID-19 dashboard](#). The dashboard is a tool that can be used, along with other data and information, by school districts to help determine if / when a classroom, grade level, school or entire district should close as a result of COVID-19 cases.

The SDNB's Pandemic Response Team regularly monitors the Waukesha County dashboard as well as our own internal information and other factors. If it is determined that a closure of any kind as a result of COVID-19 is necessary, we will work quickly to inform families and shift to the appropriate educational model.

The dashboard provides a breakdown of total active child cases within each Waukesha County school district's boundaries. According to the dashboard, there are currently nine active child cases within our district's boundaries, but please note, most likely because school has not yet started, we have not yet been made aware of any active child cases of students who are slated to start school next week.

Additionally, there are a few other things we'd like to note for parents and families who view and interpret the dashboard data:

- The total active child cases reported on the dashboard includes children who attend public and private schools, students who open enroll into other districts and those who are homeschooled.
- The total active child cases includes children ages 0-5, or in other words, some children who are not yet school-aged or enrolled in our schools.
- Likewise, the total active child cases includes all 18-year-olds, and does not differentiate between those currently attending high school and recent graduates.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing

Contact tracing will begin immediately if / when we are made aware of a student or employee testing positive for COVID-19. Our district nurse or our school health room assistants will conduct contact tracing for students who test positive by asking who they have been in close contact with. They will then identify and ask questions of those identified as being in close contact with an individual that tested positive for COVID-19. The Director of Employment Services will follow similar procedures for any employees who test positive or are considered a close contact of someone who tested positive.

As the contact tracing process continues, a team comprised of me, the district nurse, health room assistants, the Director of Employee Services, the Director of Buildings and Grounds and the Waukesha County Health Department will review each report and determine the next steps related to cleaning, disinfecting, communication and closures, if necessary.

Staff Health Screening Process

This week, all SDNB staff began using a COVID-19 screener sent by the district's nearsite health clinic, Paladina. Paladina texts all staff members the screener prior to the start of the day,

and it must be completed no later than 1 hour before employees report for work. If an employee confirms via the survey they are symptom-free, have had no close contact and have not tested positive recently, then they receive a clearance message to return to work. If not, Paladina will contact the employee for follow-up questions and to potentially schedule a clinic visit for a COVID-19 test. Paladina will also provide guidance on when to quarantine and for what length.

New Learning Management System

Today, building principals shared information about the SDNB's new learning management system, Canvas. Canvas replaces PowerSchool Learning and will serve as a hub for course content and information for all students, both in-person and virtual. The email from the schools has important instructions on how to create both student and parent accounts, and I encourage you to check it out prior to the first day of school. More information can also be found in the "Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment" section of the [Reopening Schools Handbook & FAQs](#).

Food Service Update

The [United States Department of Agriculture announced](#) that school districts will be able to continue to offer one complimentary lunch per child per day – regardless of a family's economic status - until federal funds run out or Dec. 31, 2020, whichever comes first. That means students who are attending classes in person will not be charged for a school lunch if they chose to take one. Also, students learning virtually may register to participate in our lunch pick-up program. More information can be found in the "Lunch and Recess" section of our [Reopening Schools Handbook & FAQs](#).

Schedule for First Two Weeks

As a reminder, the first two weeks of school will look like this:

- **Sept. 8-11 - the first week of school:** For those who chose the in-person instructional model, Sept. 8-11 will be a phased hybrid model of both in-person learning and distance learning. (Those who chose the full distance learning will not experience a change to their schedule).
 - Sept. 8-9 - Students with last names beginning in A-Lam will be in school; students with last names beginning in Lan-Z will participate in distance learning.
 - Sept. 10-11 - Students with last names beginning in A-Lam will participate in distance learning; students with last names beginning in Lan-Z will be in school.
- **Sept. 14-18 - the second week of school:** For those who chose the in-person instructional model, Sept. 14-18 will be a phased hybrid model of both in-person learning and distance learning. (Those who chose the full distance learning will not experience a change to their schedule).
 - Sept. 14 - ALL students will be learning from home and staff will be onsite to review processes and practices and plan for future learning.
 - Sept. 15-16 - Students with last names beginning in A-Lam will be in school; students with last names beginning in Lan-Z will participate in distance learning.
 - Sept. 17-18 - Students with last names beginning in A-Lam will participate in distance learning; students with last names beginning in Lan-Z will be in school.

- **Sept. 21** - pending further information or updates, the hybrid phase will end and all students who chose the in-person instructional model will be in school in-person as originally planned.



Questions? Check Out Our Reopening Handbook

The answers to many frequently asked questions are available in the [SDNB's Reopening Schools Handbook and FAQs](#), which is updated regularly and will continue to be during the first semester. We hope that families familiarize themselves with the handbook and the links to important resources contained within it. Have a question that isn't answered in the handbook? We encourage you to reach out to your student's teacher or building principal.

Last school year ended like no other in history; likewise, the 2020-21 school year is beginning unlike any other. As I've said many times over the last several months, we collectively thank you for your support and patience as we navigate these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Joe Garza, Superintendent