

August 10, 2020

Dear Discovery Public School Parents and Guardians,

The staff at Discovery Public School is gearing up to start another terrific school year! We hope everyone has had a safe and fun-filled summer. We look forward to seeing our returning students, as well as meeting new members of the Discovery family! We appreciate your patience and understanding as we, too, have waited for a clear direction on how to organize learning this fall. Governor Walz announced school district operations for the 2020-21 school year will be driven by county-level COVID-19 virus metrics provided by the Minnesota Department of Health. It is clear that our local collective effort to contain the spread of COVID-19 will determine whether or not learners can attend school in-person.

We were hoping to have a final answer from the Governor, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the Minnesota Department of Education on what the fall would look like. Based on the direction from the Governor, we anticipate needing additional time to analyze how we apply, implement and adapt these parameters at Discovery Public School of Faribault, and to communicate with other school leaders in the district. Because our transportation is provided by Faribault Transportation, our plans will have to align with those of the Faribault Public Schools. We understand the challenge this uncertainty causes for families and staff and we want you to know that we will communicate as quickly as possible when decisions are made.

Even though a decision about the fall has not been made at this time, the Governor's announcement did provide some guidance on how we will begin school this fall and move between models. Districts will use COVID-19 data — the number of cases per 10,000 over 14 days by residence of the county — to determine the appropriate model of learning:

- 0-9, In-person learning for all students
- 10-19, In-person learning for elementary students and hybrid for secondary students
- 20-29, Hybrid learning for all students
- 30-49, Hybrid learning for elementary students and distance learning for secondary students
- 50+, Distance Learning for all students

We are working with MDH to get timelines for decision making and baseline data for Rice County. We will provide further updates when possible, and a decision will be announced the **week of August 17th**.

Full Time Distance Learning Option

For families who are concerned about contracting the virus, a full time distance learning option is available. You may opt into a full time distance learning option, regardless of what other learning model may be in place.

This full time distance learning option will have **more direct instruction time** (via video chat, phone or text communication, or instructional time spent in an online learning environment), compared to our Spring 2020 distance learning.

If you would like to opt your learner into the Distance Learning Option, please complete the form on our website (isd4081.org) as soon as possible. For planning purposes we are asking families to opt in for at least the first quarter (through early November). In order to complete our planning process this registration form will close Friday, August 21, at 11:59 p.m. Any enrollment requests into the distance learning option after this date should be directed to Dan Weisser (dweisser@isd4081.org).

Our Hybrid Model

We wanted to give families a picture of what the hybrid model would entail should any of our learning levels move to this scenario. Within the hybrid model we will follow MDH guidance and the MDE guidance including, but not limited to the following:

- Limit building occupancy to no more than 50% with sufficient room for social distancing
- Limit room occupancy to no more than 50% with sufficient room for social distancing
- Limit transportation occupancy to no more than 50%

Face Coverings

As per the Governor's Executive Order and Minnesota Department of Health requirements, all staff, learners, and visitors will be required to wear face coverings while in district buildings and on buses. Each learner will be provided a cloth face covering.

School begins on **Tuesday, September 8, 2020**, the day after Labor Day. Due to a calendar change by Faribault Public Schools, we have changed our calendar, and this start date will not be official until it is approved by our school board.

Everyone is welcome to join us for our **Open House on Wednesday, August 26th, 2020 from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm**. We highly encourage **NEW students and families** to visit during this time, and meet their new teachers! Social distancing and masks will be expected.

Due to the large amount of communication we will be having this year, it is **VITAL** that we have **updated phone numbers and email addresses** for all family contacts. Please be sure to check with Karen to ensure we have your most updated contact information.

Students will need to bring their own supplies. Shared classroom supplies will not be allowed with our Covid plan. Students should bring a backpack each day **including notebooks, folders, and**

writing instruments. Students should plan on keeping their backpack with them throughout the day.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that if school is cancelled or delayed for inclement weather, the local TV stations will be notified. Please check Kare11, KSTP, or WCCO to see if Discovery Public School of Faribault is included with any school closings or delays. Furthermore, for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year, we will continue to notify parents/guardians via our JMC online messaging system of these same school delays and closures via text, voicemail, and/or email.

Again, as in previous years, we would like to inform you that Discovery Public School is trying to do its part in saving our environment for the future generations to come. In doing so, we are not sending out a copy of our Student Handbook. Please read and review a copy of our Student Handbook by visiting the school website at isd4081.org/. If you do not have access to the web, or a paper copy is preferred; you or your student may pick up a copy in the school office at any time! As always, thank you for your understanding and help in saving the environment, as well as reducing costs. Also, be sure to check out our new Facebook page at www.facebook.com/discoveryfaribault. You can also follow us on Instagram at www.instagram.com/discoveryfaribault.

Lastly, but extremely important, included with this letter are additional forms that must be completed, signed, and returned, on or before the first day of school. Included with these additional forms is the Application for Free and Reduced Lunch. This form is extremely important to our school's financial well-being and should be fully completed. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

We look forward to the 2020-2021 school year with you!

Sincerely,

Dan Weisser

Executive Director

Discovery Public School

507-331-5423

dweisser@isd4081.org