

Cloquet Public Schools will be open to full in-person instruction for all grade levels to begin the year. Families have the option to choose distance learning to begin the school year, if they wish. For families choosing distance learning, we request that you communicate your intent with your child's school by August 26<sup>th</sup>. This information is critical for our schools to adjust our class sizes and prepare technology devices for distribution. You can sign up for distance learning by completing the form previously emailed to families or by calling your child's school.

Please know that our school model may change throughout the year, as directed by the *Minnesota Safe Learning Plan*, based on the rates of COVID-19 within Carlton County. Cloquet Public Schools will post its official 2020-21 school year plan on our website by August 26<sup>th</sup>. This plan shares information on each of the three models which schools may use throughout the school year. You should have received a message from your school sharing information regarding the school's plan on Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup>. If you did not receive this message, please contact your school during normal business hours for details. The remainder of this message provides more information regarding the decision for school opening and potential changes as we move through the school year.

Cloquet Public Schools has been monitoring county data from the Minnesota Department of Health and following the *Minnesota Safe Learning Plan* to determine the appropriate model for the beginning of school. Schools are required to announce the opening model at least two weeks before the start of the school year. Data on county COVID rates is released Thursday of each week, which put our final and most recent data point at August 21<sup>st</sup>. We have reviewed our weekly rates up until the 21<sup>st</sup> and our county numbers have consistently remained within the range which allows for full in-person instruction for all grades. The numbers have fluctuated over the summer and have shown a slight trend of slow increase. We also monitored data from other like-sized counties to see if patterns or trends in the data could be identified. Data for similar counties fluctuated greatly between, and sometimes within, the counties and was inconsistent, showing no real pattern. We will continue to monitor numbers weekly and consult with the Minnesota Department of Health to determine if school model changes are needed under the *Minnesota Safe Learning Plan*.

It's important to encourage people to follow reasonable precautions to slow the spread of COVID to allow our students to remain in school. All schools will have increased precautions in place to minimize potential spread of COVID. If numbers continue to increase, schools will be required to move to a more restrictive school model and we may be required to shift to a hybrid model shortly after the start of the school year. We encourage all families to plan in advance and be prepared. Schools are allowed a maximum of 5 days to prepare for a shift in model, meaning changes will be rapid, if needed.

This is a monumental shift in our system of schooling and is new for us all. We have been busy preparing for the year and will improve systems throughout the year as we learn through experience. We strongly encourage families to share any problems or difficulties you encounter, especially in our distance learning model. Our goal is to provide a high quality education to all of our students and strong communication between home and school is important in achieving that goal. Should you encounter issues during the year, we encourage that you first communicate with your teacher. If your teacher is unable to assist in resolving the problem, reach out to your

building principal. We are here to support our families in educating the children of our community.

We thank you in advance for your understanding and communication as we move through this school year. Know that we are here to help and support a positive learning experience for our students and families.

Thank you!