

Recent changes by the Governor and the Minnesota Department of Education allow for the return to in-person learning for elementary students (grades K-6) under new increased precautions, regardless of county case rates. Cloquet Public Schools is currently making preparations to see if a return to in-person learning is possible under these requirements. Elementary families should expect a contact from their student's classroom teacher this week. Teachers will be surveying families regarding your intentions to send your child back to in-person learning. This information is necessary for the district to determine any additional staffing needs prior to announcing bringing students back into the buildings. Our hope is to return our elementary students to in-person learning as soon as safely possible.

A brief summary of the additional requirements can be found below. According to state officials, these changes are due to gains in understanding in how COVID-19 is spread and impacts younger students.

- No more than three additional grades can be introduced into a building in a two week time period when implementing an in-person learning model for the entire school building.
- Schools must execute a COVID-19 testing program every other week for school staff. Staff may choose whether or not to participate.
- It is recommended that face masks and face shields be worn together by school staff at all times.
- When educators cannot be six feet from students (small group and individual instruction), when possible add a clear barrier between the adult and student.
- Face coverings must be worn when engaging in indoor physical activity (e.g., during indoor recess, indoor physical education class, or when exercising in a gym)
- For K-6: All student meal times must be held in the classroom.
- For in-person only: three feet of physical distancing or more is strongly recommended.

County case rate numbers have also been dropping in recent weeks, which may allow for a return to in-person learning for students in higher grade levels (grades 7-12). While county case rates remain high, we will be consulting with the Minnesota Department of Health Regional Support Team to consider options for a return to in-person learning for our secondary students. As with our elementary students, our goal is to return our students to in-person learning as soon as we are safely able to do so in conjunction with state guidelines.

We will provide advanced notice to families regarding any changes to the learning model.