



Southwestern

Wisconsin Community School District

P.O. Box 368
Hazel Green, Wisconsin 53811
Phone (608) 854-2261
Fax (608) 854-2305
<https://www.swsd.k12.wi.us>

ADMINISTRATION

John B. Costello
District Administrator

August 13, 2021

Cynthia A. Lacey
MS/HS Principal

Angela L. Barth
Elementary Principal
Special Ed. Director

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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President

Jackie Birkett
Vice President

Lawrence Grant
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Steven G. Hoppman
Storey Dreessens
Anne M. Redfearn

Dear Parents and Guardians of the Southwestern School District:

Welcome back to the 2021-2022 school year! We recognize this will be another school year with challenges, uncertainty, and hurdles to overcome related to how COVID-19 continues to shape the way schools look and operate. While it hasn't been easy for everyone to adjust, we appreciate all the effort made. We are here to support you however we can so we can best provide for our staff and students in our schools.

I hope this letter finds you safe and doing well. Over the past year and a half, we have been dealing with some unprecedented times in our community and schools. We continue to hear, "We want to get back to normal," but in reality those days are gone. We now need to learn how to live with COVID-19 similar to the way the flu affects us. The virus in our local community has been low all summer. At any rate, we will need to be prepared in case there are spikes in cases.

RETURN TO SCHOOL: We are planning to come back to school full-time for all grade levels. On August 11, 2021, our school board approved to have masks "optional" at all times while on campus. This includes sporting events and in the classrooms. We will need to follow the CDC order for public transportation and school buses. **Masks are required** on school buses. This CDC order is set to expire on September 13th. If/when it does expire, we will determine if masks can be optional on the buses.

VIRTUAL OPTION: We are offering a virtual option for students who are not able to attend school in-person due to the high risk their families are experiencing. The virtual option is different from what we offered last year so please contact the office to find out more information about the virtual option being offered.

Attached to this email is a matrix, approved by our school board, that we will use as a guide to determine the level of risk in our district. You can also find this matrix on our school district website. Please know that we understand that we have community members, families, students and staff members who may feel we should have done things differently. We respect and understand everyone's position may be different. We are putting this matrix in place as we take into account all aspects. This may not be a perfect plan; however, to our knowledge, there is no perfect plan that everyone will agree on. We do feel like we have a plan that allows us to balance the physical, intellectual, emotional and social safety for our students and staff while continuing with full-time, face-to-face instruction.

MATRIX: There are four phases of transmission on the matrix. **Blue** represents low transmission, **yellow** represents moderate transmission, **orange** represents substantial transmission, and **red** represents high transmission. Our school board approved this approach utilizing a set number of positive cases per day, per school. We will monitor cases of COVID-19 in our district on a daily basis and will plan to use this matrix until we no longer need it.

STATE FREE TESTING: The district will be participating in the state free testing program. We are working with a couple local districts to provide that site in our communities.

QUARANTINE PROCESS: The quarantine process will look similar to last year and will take into account the direction from the CDC, State Health Department, and our County. We know that not all individuals might not always agree with this process, but we have to take into account these recommendations while we mitigate the spread. We will continue to clean and use the protexus spray, wipe down surfaces, provide wipes, and have seating charts to help with contact tracing. Please look for more information in the coming weeks and throughout the school year.

We have great students, caring and passionate staff members, and a very supportive community. As we continue to work together, it will take everyone doing their part to help mitigate the spread of this virus and other illnesses will help us achieve our goal of staying in school all year. Please remember to keep your child home if they are running a fever or sick.

In closing, we are looking forward to getting our students back in session very soon. We appreciate the understanding and cooperation that we have experienced from all of you. The more we stick together and work together, the better our school year will be.

Sincerely

John Costello

John Costello
Superintendent
Southwestern Schools

Please see the provided links below for detailed information from the State on COVID.

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction COVID-19 Infection Control and Mitigation Measures for Wisconsin Schools 2021/22](#)

[Guidelines for the Prevention, Investigation, and Control of COVID-19 Outbreaks in K-12 Schools in Wisconsin](#)