



February 25, 2021

Dear Families,

Thank you for your continued unconditional support and flexibility during this school year. As promised in my communication to you last week, I am writing today with important updates to the [Minnesota Safe Learning Plan](#) and our plan to bring grades 6-12 learners to all in-person learning. As we return our learners to more on-site learning, we are appreciative of the community partnerships that have prioritized educators and arranged for vaccinations for many of our staff. This collaboration assists us in providing additional protections for our educators.

I have been asked the question, "Why only a four day in-person week for our students?" In order for us to meet the guidance of Executive Order 20-82 and, more importantly, meet the needs of our students and families that have chosen a full distance learning opportunity, our 6-12 staff needs time to provide a minimum of one day per week to provide the needed connection with our distance learning students. Families who chose a distance learning model for their child(ren) earlier in the year will continue to use the distance learning model.

Mitigation Strategies:

The following mitigation strategies will be critical in keeping our students in school for the remainder of the year.

- 1) Required wearing of face coverings in all buildings unless otherwise directed.
- 2) Social distancing of at least 3 feet when feasible.
- 3) Disinfection/Sanitizing after each class period.
- 4) Quarantine for any close contacts.

All 6-12 Buildings (OMS, OHS, ALC)

6-12th grade students and staff will start our four-day in-person learning model on Tuesday, March 30. Thursday, March 18 and Monday, March 29 will be transition days for 6-8 staff, and no distance or hybrid learning will be scheduled on these dates. This time will be used to prepare the building for additional mitigation strategies, curriculum, and systems alignment for teaching staff. This will also alter the week prior to spring break to accommodate the end of the quarter.

Monday, March 15 - Group 1 Hybrid Day

Tuesday, March 16 - Group 2 Hybrid Day

Wednesday, March 17 - Distance Learning Day and OHS Testing Day

Thursday, March 18 - Transition Day (No School for 6-12 students)
Friday, March 19 - Friday, March 26 - Spring Break (No school for K-12 Students)
Monday, March 29 - Transition Day (No School for 6-12 students)
Tuesday, March 30 - First Day of All-In-Person Learning 6-12

Transportation:

All E-12 learners who are currently riding the bus will continue on their current schedule unless contacted by the Owatonna Bus Company. All students riding from the country will follow their Monday/Tuesday schedule on Thursday and Friday. If you want to start riding and are eligible, please call the bus company at 507-451-5262. Buses will no longer be capped at 50% capacity due to the increased transportation needs with all students returning to in-person learning.

Student Nutrition:

Meal pick up will be on March 18, March 23, March 25, and March 29, from 8:30am-9:30am at the following locations. No sign up is required.

- McKinley Elementary - 1050 22nd Street NE - Main Entrance / Door #1
- Owatonna Middle School - 500 15th Street NE - Main Entrance / Door #1
- Owatonna High School - 333 E School St - Door # 16

Starting March 30, secondary students will be offered a breakfast and lunch meal to take home at the end of the school day on Tuesdays for distance learning on Wednesdays. OHS students can pick up their meal in the upper commons. OMS students can pick up their meal in the cafeteria.

We have also updated our quarantine protocols to align with current MDH and CDC guidelines. The Minnesota Department of Health is still advising that a 14-day quarantine is the safest practice but has allowed shortened quarantine timelines of 7 or 10 days when specific criteria are met. Please click [this link](#) for the form to request a shortened quarantine time.

In an effort to keep our students and staff safe and attending school, I ask for your continued vigilance with regard to social distancing, masking up and refraining from attending large gatherings.

Thank you again for your ongoing support and flexibility.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey S. Elstad
Superintendent
Owatonna Public Schools