

August 21, 2020

Dear Iowa County families,

As we approach the start of the 2020/2021 school year, we are all aware of the challenges faced by our schools. In a normal year, the schools of our community are entrusted with the safety and security of your children. That responsibility is taken to heart and a great deal of effort is expended to assure a safe learning environment.

Today, we add COVID-19 to the complexities of keeping kids safe. Collaboratively, we have gone to great lengths to reopen and provide an environment that is as safe as possible for your child. We ask that you, the parents, do your part. Please consider the implications of behaviors that put your child at risk and then put the children of others at risk for contracting this highly contagious and sometimes deadly disease. Follow the guidance of wearing masks, social distancing, avoid large gatherings, handwashing and keeping your children home from school if they are ill. Additional information regarding returning to school after COVID-19 is available for parents and guardians via this [link](#). With your help, the schools of Iowa County will be successful in providing the education and an environment with a reduced risk for this insidious virus.

If and when the time comes where we will need to pivot to virtual instruction, we realize this may be a disappointment for families who plan on an in-person experience. This pivot is also full of anxiety, frustration and challenges for families. It is disappointing and challenging to schools as well. We know a virtual learning experience can't replace what happens in our schools, but we can make it the best one available as we continue to navigate these challenging times.

An enormous amount of work has been done to get students back in school as safely as possible because we all know this is where they thrive best. We know that your children miss their teachers and other educators and that your children are anxious to return to school.

Flexibility will continue to be important as we forge on through this pandemic and prepare the best we can for all scenarios as we look ahead, not just to the fall, but to the entire school year. We appreciate your continued patience and cooperation as we embark on the start of the school year. Know that your schools and collaborating agencies are committed to providing opportunities for community building and connections while caring for the social and emotional well-being of every student.

Thank you for continuing to partner with your local schools as we all embark on an interesting chapter in 2020. By working together, with patience, we know we can achieve another successful school year!

Best Wishes for the 2020-2021 School Year,

Keith Hurlbert, Director
Iowa County Emergency Management

Debbie Siegenthaler, Director/Health Officer
Iowa County Health Department

Stephanie Hubbard, Superintendent
Iowa-Grant School District

Joseph Price, Superintendent
Barneveld School District

Mitch Wainwright, Superintendent
Mineral Point School District

Jill Underly, Superintendent
Pecatonica Area School District

Paul Weber, Superintendent
Dodgeville School District

Bryce Bird, Superintendent
Highland Community Schools

Robert Smudde, Director of Student Services
Dodgeville School District

Jacquelyn Goetzke, Director of Teaching and Learning
Dodgeville School District