



April 16, 2021

Dear MRUSD Parents,

Before students leave for their spring break, I want to give you a few updates.

As he does regularly, the Governor spoke last Friday regarding changes to regulations for schools. Below are key changes we wanted you to be aware of:

- Temperature checks and check-in questions in the morning are no longer required, but parents are asked to check temperatures at home and not send any child with symptoms to school. There will be signs at entrances stating masks must be worn and not to enter if you have symptoms.
- As part of Vermont's phased reopening plan, there is new travel guidance, effective April 9, 2021. Except for [international travel](#), **travel no longer requires quarantine**.
 - Unvaccinated Vermonters who have traveled outside the state must be tested within 3 days of returning to Vermont. [Learn more](#).
 - Unvaccinated people planning to visit Vermont must have a COVID-19 test within 3 days before arriving in Vermont. [Learn more](#).
 - Rules for international travel are different. [Learn more](#).
- The requirement for disinfecting is now only where there was someone displaying symptoms or testing positive for COVID, otherwise normal cleaning is sufficient. Having said that, we plan to remain extra vigilant in this area.
- The social distancing has been reduced to three feet for the most part, and teachers will continue to keep a six-foot distance.

Thus far, we have been very successful in keeping COVID at bay in our schools. Though we have had cases at each campus, generally, we have kept them from spreading by our constant monitoring, strict following of contact tracing processes, quarantining and ensuring everyone follows protocols around distancing, masks, etc. Though we have had to quarantine some students and staff, we have never had to close a school. We have accomplished these successes by following our three metrics that we use to make decisions around the opening of school. As a reminder, they are:

1. Do we have adequate staffing levels?
2. Are our health and safety practices and routines well established?
3. Does our collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health suggest our community infection rates are low enough that it is safe for us to bring more students back?

You can view Maple Run's COVID Cases at our new tracking page by going to <https://www.maplerun.org/> and selecting the **COVID-19 RESOURCES**. Use the top link on the left: **MRUSD COVID-19 Cases**.

Our next challenge is how and if we can begin bringing in more students four days per week. I am currently closely watching the community spread in our region before I make the decision to bring more students back. The weeks after Spring Break will be used for SBAC testing while continuing to keep our 7-12 students in hybrid mode. That will allow us to continue to monitor community spread which, as you know, is presently quite significant. If it is satisfactorily reduced, and we have sufficient staffing who are not quarantining, we are aiming to bring back the 7th grades and 8th grades for 4 days at some point in May. If we are able to do this, you will be given sufficient notice.

As for grades 9-12, we do not believe that it will be possible to increase their in-school learning at this time. While the guidance decreased to 3 feet, most of our classrooms at BFA are too small to accommodate all of our students at that distance. Staff have actually gone in rooms with tape measures to see if this will work, and it doesn't. In addition, the age group most affected by COVID right now are high school to late twenties. We do not want to risk having students get sick during the last 6 weeks of the school year which could jeopardize end-of-school events such as senior activities. Having said that, we continue to monitor and, if things change, we will adjust accordingly.

The good news is that people are increasingly being vaccinated, and there is a light at the end of the tunnel! We are fully expecting and planning to return to a more traditional school-year next year, and it won't be too soon for us! We realize this has been a tough time for everyone, and we need a break.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to navigate these constantly changing conditions. Our parents and students have been wonderful throughout this pandemic. Certainly, when I am looking back at the last year and a half, the high point for me will be how our community pulled together and helped each other.

To all of you, have a wonderful break.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin Dirth,
Superintendent