



Barneveld School District

*"...a community striving towards
excellence in education."*

July 16, 2021

To: Students, Staff, Families, and Community Members

From: Joseph Price, Superintendent

Re: Preparations for the start of the school year

Greetings! I hope this letter finds you well and that you are enjoying your summer.

This message is to provide you with an update regarding our preparations for the start of the school year. In March 2020, all our lives were suddenly disrupted by a global pandemic. While we are grateful and hopeful to be at the tail end of this generational event, we are also mindful of how it has affected our students, staff, families, and community members. We have all been through so much, and I am truly grateful to our staff, our board of education, and our community for the combined efforts put forth in serving the students here in Barneveld.

We may not be fully out of this pandemic, but rest assured that we are committed to successful learning outcomes for ALL students. Our top priorities to address for this upcoming year include academic achievement, social-emotional wellbeing, COVID-19 protocols, and establishing a new "normal" for our learning community.

Academic Achievement:

Through data analysis and making informed decisions, we have restructured our schedule to allow more time for teacher collaboration at the elementary and middle school, increased math instructional minutes at the middle school, and added a full-time reading specialist/interventionist. This will enable more comprehensive instructional coaching throughout the district.

We are also expanding our Star Assessment to include grades 4K through 10, enabling us to better understand the individual needs of our students. We have also adopted Freckle, a supplemental program that works directly with the Star Assessment. Lastly, we have three staff members who are now trained in the [Orton Gillingham method](#) for reading intervention.

Social-Emotional Wellbeing:

During the 2020-21 school year, a School Wellness Team was created to address mental health and wellness for our students and staff. We received professional development leveraging restorative circles as a means of community building and inclusion. These practices will continue to be developed and implemented in the upcoming school year. We have also continued our partnership with Oregon Mental Health to provide services for those in need.

To help us better understand our students, we are implementing [PASS](#), a screener that will help us identify social and emotional barriers to learning. Additionally, we are adopting [SPARK PE](#), a [research-based physical education](#) program. With this adoption, all students in grades K-8 will receive 30 minutes of physical education every day.

COVID-19 Protocols:

The most recent guidance [from the CDC](#) has helped us determine how school will operate in the fall. We have put together a [FAQ document](#) and will continue to update it as more information becomes available. As we have learned over the last

year, the situation surrounding COVID-19 can be very fluid. We will continue to collaborate with the Iowa County Health Department and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to make informed decisions.

At the July 14 Regular School Board meeting, a decision was made to make face coverings optional for all students. There will be exceptions to this policy, as there are still federal mandates in place. For example, students will likely need to wear masks on school buses and when using public transportation. This applies to all students riding transportation to and from school, as well as for co-curricular activities. We will continue to monitor vaccination rates and transmission rates to make decisions that are in the best interest of our students, staff, and community members.

New “Normal”:

In reflecting on my first year here at Barneveld, I have been continually amazed at how well the community has come together in support of our students. We had to make many pivots among in-person, virtual, and hybrid learning models. There were challenges and setbacks along the way, but we stayed the course and did our very best. The resilience demonstrated by our students, staff, and community members is something that will not soon be forgotten — and it will serve as an inspiration for many years to come.

Again, we appear to be at the tail end of this pandemic and restrictions have been loosening up. However, we must continue to do everything we can to ensure our students are where they need to be — here at school, learning in person!

I have been asked many times, “When will we return to the way things were before?” Honestly, I do not have an answer for that. In fact, considering this is my first year at Barneveld, the current situation has been my “normal.” However, if it is any indication of what is to come, I personally cannot wait to see what our new normal will be when we can resume living in a post-pandemic world.

Thank you again for your continued support. I look forward to meeting you in person in the weeks and months ahead!

Sincerely,

Joseph Price
Superintendent