

August 16, 2021

Greetings EGF ISD 595 Families and Staff Members,

I hope all of you have been enjoying the summer months and are getting prepared for returning to school in a few weeks! District officials were hoping for the end of the COVID era and being able to return to learning environments that resembled the fall of 2019. However, the recent COVID surge has caused school districts throughout the country and state to adjust their 2021-22 return to school plans. East Grand Forks ISD 595 is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff, students, guests and visitors. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities while creating positive learning experiences for our students. This is a very emotional topic for many families, staff members, school district leaders, and community members. The EGF ISD 595 Board of Education has been receiving input and updates regarding the District's Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan for most of the summer. A DRAFT plan has been posted on the school district website since June 21, 2021, and links are available to comment on the DRAFT plan, as well as read all of the comments from stakeholders. I suggest going to the following link to read the DRAFT (subject to change), read the comments, and provide input.

[Link to East Grand Forks ISD 595 21-22 Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan Information Safe](#)

The EGF ISD 595 Board of Education will be meeting in special session at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 17, 2021. The meeting will be held in Room 195 of the Senior High School and we hope to be able to live stream the meeting with the recently installed video conferencing equipment.

**PLEASE NOTE: The primary reason for the special school board meeting is to DISCUSS the Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan. No formal action will be taken to approve a plan until the regular school board meeting on Monday, August 23, 2021. Public input will not be available during the special school board meeting on August 17, 2021, but available during the August 23, 2021 regular school board meeting. District administrators and school board members would greatly appreciate receiving your written input about the return to school plan. You can go to the link above to comment on the plans.**

District leaders will continue to meet with public health officials to develop a plan that keeps everyone safe and meets the needs of our families. Please go to page two of this update for more information about the return to school plans and feel free to contact me by phone, email or stop by my office if you want to express your concerns, provide input, or visit.

Thank you!

***Mike Kolness***

Superintendent of Schools

EGF ISD 595

218-793-2880

## COVID-19 Return to School Information

- School districts must adopt a formal “Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan” by the start of the 2021-22 school year.
- MN school boards currently have **local control** in the decision making process regarding mitigation strategies with the exception of required masking on school buses. The masking requirement on school buses is currently a federal mandate and school districts would be taking a very serious liability risk by not following the mandate.
- The EGF 595 Board of Education plans to adopt a formal “Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan” at their regular meeting on Monday, August 23, 2021. The official plan will be subject to change based on recommendations and/or requirements from local, state, and federal public health officials and government agencies.
- EGF ISD 595 is currently not requiring students and staff members to wear masks in buildings and classrooms, but recommends their use to help prevent the spread of the virus.
- EGF ISD 595 encourages staff members and families to consider receiving the COVID-19 vaccination if eligible.
- Staff members and students who are fully vaccinated or properly masked could be exempt from quarantining restrictions when deemed a close contact.
- MN school districts are not required to offer the Flex-Option (FT distance learning) this year. EGF ISD 595 has received temporary approval as an online learning provider, but is currently not offering the option. A final decision on whether to offer or not offer the option will be a part of the officials plan, **PLEASE NOTE - A separate parent survey regarding a FT online option may be available later this week. The decision to offer or not offer an option to families will be based on demand and the ability to make staff adjustments. It may require a long-term commitment (up to 9-18 weeks) by families.**
- Daily symptom screening and staying home when sick, will be critical to making the 2021-22 school year a success!

