

Morrill Schools Plan to begin the 2020-2021 school year in light of COVID-19

Mission:

While carefully attending to the health and safety of students and staff, we will endeavor to maximize student learning and minimize the clumsiness and burden to the parents, school staff and the community.

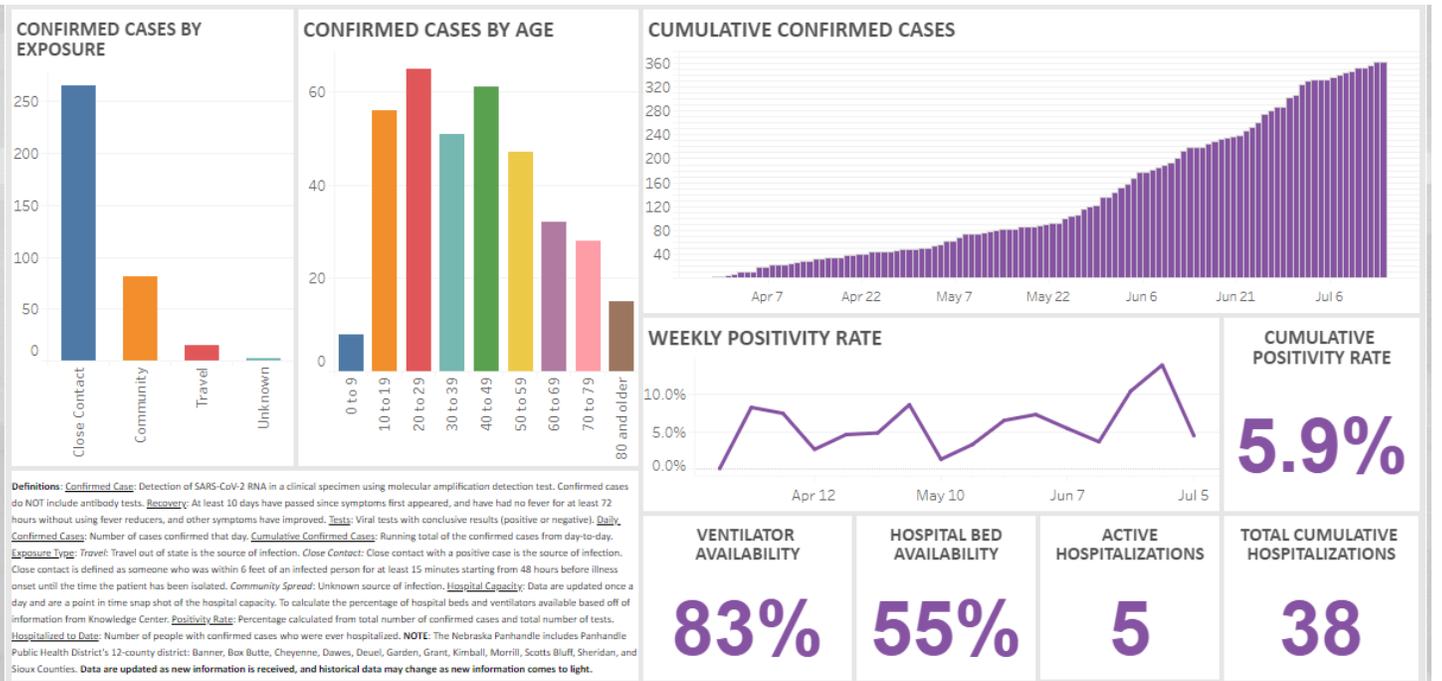
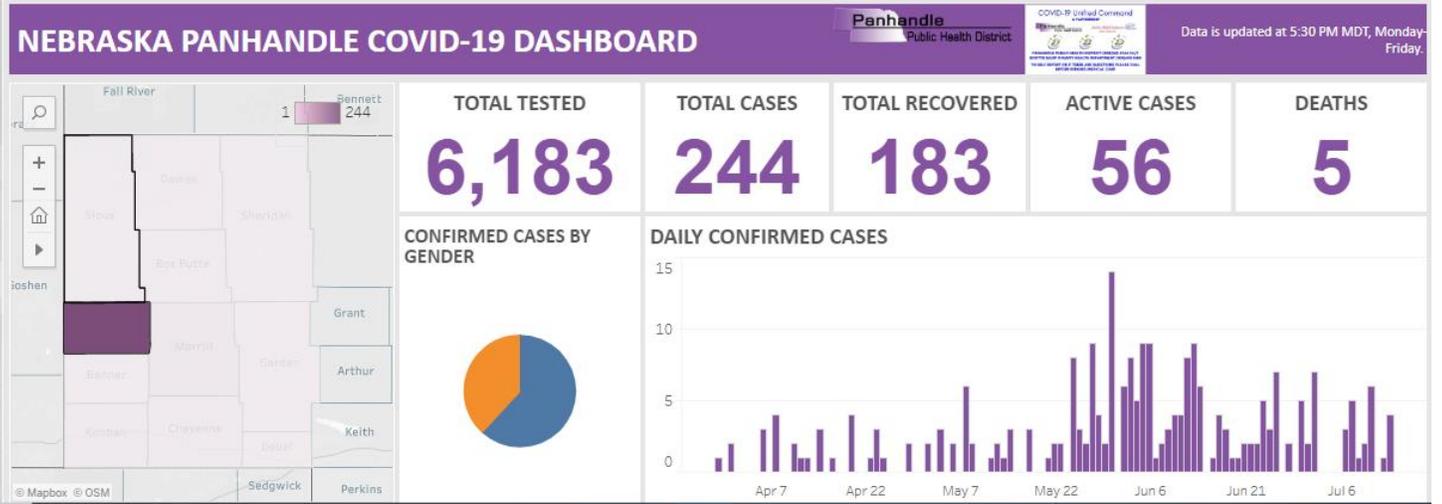
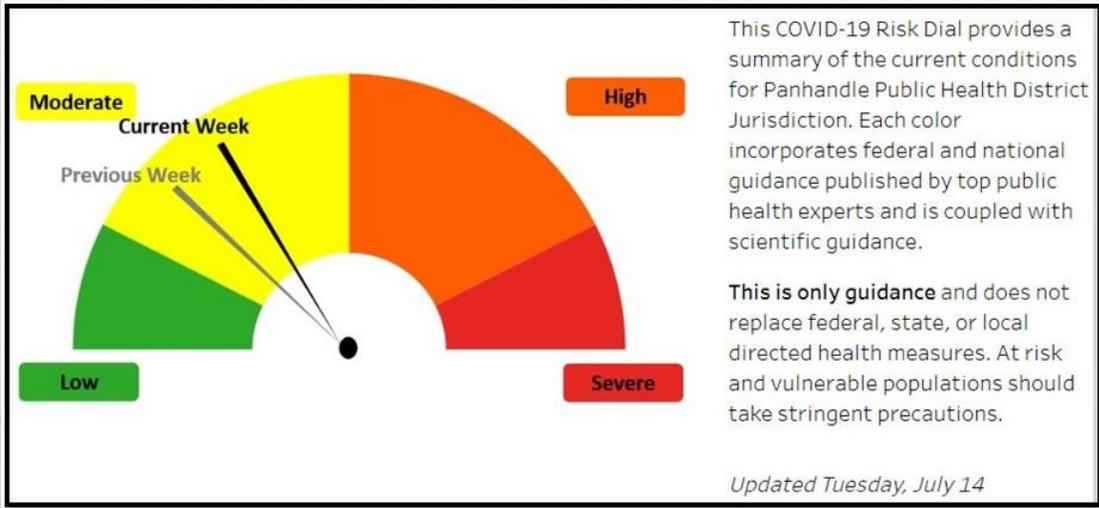
Let's unpack that mission.

1. From March 15, 2020 when the decision was made at the urging of Nebraska's Commissioner of Education to deliver education remotely for at least two weeks (which turned into the rest of the school year) Morrill's school board and administration determined to maximize our attention to the needs of our students, both educational and nutritional. We attempted to attend to their social and emotional needs as well by utilizing interactive systems to connect school staff with the students. We did not wait for weeks to see if the situation would pass, and then have to figure out what we would do and how would we do it. We determined on Sunday March 15th, that by Wednesday we would deliver instruction and meals to all of our students.
2. Early this summer, when we began contemplation about the fall there was indication from the Governor and Commissioner that we might need to have reduced class sizes, blended learning with a mix between face-to-face and remote learning design similar to the 4th quarter of last year during the COVID Closure. **HOWEVER**, when the Governor moved us to **DHM PHASE 3**, he and the Commissioner both communicated that in Phase 3, no restrictions to schools are required. **THEREFORE**, we are planning to begin school **face-to-face** for all students **5-days-a-week**.
3. We will continue the Health and Safety precautions that we began on May 11th when the early childhood facility reopened to Pride Cub Care children, preschool Summer Day Camp and elementary students for Summer School and Extended Summer Learning. These precautions have been and will continue for children and students: infant – 12th grades:
 - a. Illness Monitoring:
 - i. Each student and staff will be temperature checked **three times daily**.
 - ii. Prior to students getting on the buses, prior to non-bus students entering the buildings, if they demonstrate a temperature higher than 100° they will not be permitted entry onto the bus or entry into the buildings. **Parents will be notified that entry was not permitted.**
 - iii. At 10:30 AM, as any student who may have taken fever reducing medication before coming to school, would likely be elevating in temperature. It is **IMPERATIVE** that Staff and Students do **NOT** take fever-reducing medication before coming to school.
 - iv. After Lunch or after Lunch Recess. If a student demonstrates a temperature higher than 100° we will check again, 15 minutes later, if still elevated:
 1. The student will be isolated
 2. Parents/guardian will be called
 3. Student will need to be picked up within 30 minutes
 - v. Students and Staff who register above 100° will need to be fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school.
 - vi. Symptomatic students and staff must **STAY AT HOME**.

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- b. Hand-washing & Hand-sanitizing:
 - i. Each student K-6 and each staff member must use hand-sanitizer upon entry of the bus or buildings and anytime they return to the room from the bathroom, recess, specials, lunchroom, after they have coughed, sneezed or used a tissue.
 - ii. Each student 7-12 and each staff member must use hand-sanitizer upon entry of the bus or buildings and anytime they enter the room, when reentering the room when they have left for any reason, after they have coughed, sneezed or used a tissue.
 - iii. Each child and staff member in early childhood must wash their hands the prescribed times per day for the prescribed length of time.
 - iv. Avoid Touching high touch surfaces; wash hands or apply hand sanitizer after doing so.
- c. Wearing Masks:
 - i. Staff members and Students 3rd – 12th grades are encouraged to wear masks when social distancing of more than 6' is not possible.
 - ii. Families have the ultimate decision about whether or not their children wear masks UNLESS the panhandle risk dial moves into the high risk zone. At that point we will expect all staff and students 3rd grade and up to wear masks.
 - iii. The school has a supply of washable facemasks that we will issue to staff that don't have their own. Staff will be responsible to wash and reuse these masks or the masks they personally provide.
 - iv. We also can provide these washable masks to students 3rd – 12th grades that do not have their own but feel the need to wear them or are expected to wear them because of the risk dial. However, because the district only has a limited number of the washable masks, the masks that the school provides to students will be collected and washed at the end of each day.
 - v. Students and staff are permitted to bring and use their own masks, however, no mask sharing between students will be permitted.
- d. Disinfecting: the schools will be implementing a system of enhanced disinfection, increasing the frequency of cleaning, especially between groups
 - i. High contact surfaces (door knobs and other handles, light switches, bathroom fixtures)
 - ii. Locker rooms and weight room
 - iii. Computer labs, library, maker space, music room
 - iv. Cafeteria:
 - 1. Seats will be delineated on the benches and student will only sit every other seat so that there are only four students per table.
 - 2. Silverware will be dispensed onto the trays by cafeteria workers.
 - 3. Students will not touch the counter in the cafeteria, will be handed their tray and handed their milk.
 - 4. No salad bar will be available, however pre-packaged salads will be available for those preferring a salad meal rather than an entrée meal.

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The Panhandle Public Health Department updates the risk dial every Tuesday. We are monitoring daily and weekly to adjust our plan as necessary.

Parents and Volunteers have always been welcome at Morrill Public Schools. Because of the pandemic however, we will expect all guests to follow the same protocols and procedures described above related to staff and students in all the categories. If parents desire to attend classrooms, it is vital that they wear masks and adhere to a 6' distancing requirement. It will be mandatory for a temperature screening prior to interaction with students or staff. If parents/relatives desire to eat in the lunchroom with their students a separate table will be set to accommodate the visiting with your child during the lunch hour, but please call in advance so that the staff and cafeteria can be prepared for you.

I want to remind you of our mission related to the COVID-19 situation:

While carefully attending to the health and safety of students and staff, we will endeavor to maximize student learning and minimize the clumsiness and burden to the parents, school staff and the community.

The health and safety of students and staff must be a focus that we hold in very high regard as we open in the fall, still mitigating for the pandemic. However, the TOP PRIORITY of our school is and must always remain the education of our students. We strive to produce GRADUATES who are CONFIDENT, KNOWLEDGEABLE, PRODUCTIVE, and RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS in a diverse, ever-changing world.

The focus on health CAN NOT jeopardize the effective preparation of our students. **THEREFORE**, we are planning to begin school **face-to-face** for all students **5-days-a-week**. Our attention to the academic, social, emotional, and nutritional needs of our students is paramount.

Our attention to the health and safety of our students and staff will increase the duties we attend to, but for as long as we are permitted, by the Governor and the Commissioner, we will not limit the number of days or hours students can be in school.

Please feel free to express any comments of support or concern to me directly at joe.sherwood@mpslions.org or 247-3414.

Sincerely,

Joe Sherwood
Superintendent
Morrill Public Schools