

Dear Elmwood-Murdock Families,

July 23, 2020

As we continue to plan for the upcoming school year, we are writing to share updated information and protocols for the start of the 2020-21 school year. Currently, Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools is planning to start school on Thursday, August 13 with 100% of our student population in session. As discussed at Wednesday's special board meeting, Elmwood-Murdock has created a four tier reopening plan that we will utilize as we plan to start the new school year. The detailed plans can be viewed [HERE](#). We also have a summary document that does not include the fine details, and that can be found [HERE](#).

Moving forward, as we utilize the reopening plan, we are all going to have to be flexible and recognize that COVID-19 will determine our attendance in our buildings. At some point during the year, the district may be required to move to a reduced capacity, or even go 100% remote. Working in collaboration with the Sarpy/Cass Health Department, they have indicated movement on our "Covid Risk Dial" will depend on the levels of the virus and potential for community spread. The Sarpy/Cass Covid Risk Dial can be found [HERE](#). As of today, we are planning for a 100% opening, but there is certainly the possibility of needing to make adjustments if COVID-19 confirmed cases increase in our community in the upcoming weeks. Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools will let you know of any changes as soon as we can, so you can make adjustments for your family. We will continue to review current health data and speak to our health professionals as we draw closer to the start of the year.

As we have shared, it is our hope to have students, staff and teachers in our buildings to the greatest extent possible, while also providing a safe and healthy learning environment for our students, staff, teachers, and community as a whole. As a district, we would like to encourage our communities to work together and make decisions to social distance, wear masks, and protect ourselves from this COVID-19 pandemic. By doing this, it increases the likelihood that we will be able to keep our buildings open with school activities being held during the school year.

**Masks:** The Center for Disease Control has recommended that people wear cloth face coverings in public and stated cloth face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings. Our local health department has indicated that masks should be worn when students are not able to socially distance. For these reasons, and because we must take all measures into account in order to keep our students and staff safe, as well as to meet our goal of opening schools and keeping them open, ***masks will be required in school and on school transportation when students and staff are unable to socially distance.*** As a district, we will provide numerous opportunities throughout the day where "mask breaks" can occur, by taking students outside or providing other opportunities to safely socially distance. We understand this will not be easy or perfect. Most

importantly, we hope this is a temporary protocol put in place and will assist us in keeping our schools open during the school year.

In preparation, the district is working to provide two masks per student; one to wear and one to wash. Students are welcome to bring their own masks, or face coverings if they prefer, as long as they meet all current dress code requirements, as well as safety guidelines.

### **Concurrent Remote Option:**

Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools understands the current reality and the concern people have regarding the pandemic and have been listening to our parents and community. Our goal is to develop a plan that provides a choice of concurrent remote enrollment while we are also physically in school 100% of the time.

- What does this mean? This means Elmwood-Murdock will provide academic instruction and resources needed for your student to learn from home if you feel the remote learning option is best for your student and family. This option is different from traditional homeschooling where the family, or homeschool entity, provides the educational environment and needs.
- The program may not include all academic areas and supports for students in Pre-K-12th grade.
- The program may have both required live and recorded online opportunities.
- At the secondary level it's possible not all courses will be available for remote learning.
- Students in grades 7-12 who engage in remote learning will not be eligible for extra curricular activities.
- Families that engage in the remote learning option will be required to follow that particular educational plan for 9 weeks at a time. Students can move in and out of remote learning at the end/beginning of each quarter.
- Students who are symptomatic, ill, or are diagnosed with Covid -19 will move to remote learning during the time of the illness, and back to on-site learning once they are fully recovered.
- Please contact your building principal if you are interested, have questions, or would like to engage in the remote learning process.
  - **Secondary:** Mr. Kyle Rohrig - [krohrig@emknights.org](mailto:krohrig@emknights.org)
  - **Elementary:** Mrs. Trisha Nichelson - [tnichelson@emknights.org](mailto:tnichelson@emknights.org)
- If you are interested in having your children sign-up for remote learning please contact your building principal by **Monday, August 3, 2020.**

### **Screenings:**

#### **\*Prior to coming to school:**

Parents will be asked to screen their students for **two** of the following symptoms: temperature of 100.4 or higher, chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

**OR**

At least **one** of the following: new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss of taste and smell. If your student shows any of the aforementioned symptoms, please stay home. Consistent communication with the school will be important as we do not want children who are feeling ill to attend.

**\*During the school day:**

Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools will require daily temperature checks as students enter the building in the morning. Additionally, we will check student temperatures throughout the day. The following plan will be adhered to if a student, or staff member is symptomatic. Please see our district daily screen plan [HERE](#).

As a school district, Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools is responding to this situation by developing plans that follow official health guidance. We understand that some of the things we are asking families to do are inconvenient, and we wish this was not our current reality when opening schools. As we move closer to the start of the year, we are asking that you work with your children on wearing masks and reinforcing that they need to take precautions with their health by socially distancing and washing their hands frequently. If we can all commit to these things as we move towards the start of the school year, it would be of great benefit to all of us.

In closing, Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools will continue to provide updates as needed, as we move towards the start of the 2020-2021 school year. If you have any building specific questions, please reach out to your building principal. We hope you are able to enjoy the remainder of your summer and we look forward to working with you this upcoming school year.

Ryan Knippelmeyer  
Superintendent

Kyle Rohrig  
Jr./Sr. High Principal

Trisha Nichelson  
Elementary Principal