



MIDWEST CENTRAL CUSD #191

1010 S. Washington Street, Manito, IL 61546-8903 phone 309.968.6868 fax 309.968.7916

Dr. Todd A. Hellrigel, Superintendent

July 29, 2020

Midwest Central #191 Raiders:

The start of the new school year is fast approaching. Our District Leadership continues to work on finalizing our "Return to School Plan". Please know that if the IDPH, CDC, or ISBE make changes or releases new guidance documents, our plans will have to be modified. As you may already be aware, the following information has been issued by ISBE in conjunction with IDPH Phase 4 guidelines and are the standard that all schools must follow at this time.

Phase 4 requires:

- Use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings
- Prohibits more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space
- That social distancing be observed as much as possible
- That schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or requires that parents self-certify that students are symptom free before entering school buildings
- An increase in school wide cleaning and disinfecting.

Listed below are some of the Highlights/Key Parts of our Return to School Plan. The plan has been a collaborative effort from the school administration, department heads, union leaders, and information gathered from the parent survey that was conducted in June, all with the purpose of providing an education while keeping our students and employees safe. Please remember that many aspects of our plan are not local decisions, but guidance that must be followed from state organizations.

- It is our plan to return to in person learning for the 2020-21 school year. In-person learning 5 days a week with a shortened 1-hour early dismissal of 2:00 at MCPS, 1:45 at MCMS, and 1:50 at MCHS. This extra hour of time will allow district teachers to contact students who have been absent, work with students that have chosen remote learning, or tutor students that have returned to school from an extended absence. It will also allow for time to complete the extra cleaning and preparation that is required.
- The school year will begin for staff on August 17 & 18 with 2 teacher institute days. The district will then use 2 Remote Learning Planning Days on August 19 and 20 to conduct staff training on the required protocols and remote learning best practices. **The first student attendance day will be Friday, August 21st.**



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- Families that feel that it is unsafe for their child to attend school will be offered an online or remote learning option depending upon grade levels. This decision must be adhered to until the end of the first semester. MCMS and MCHS students that opt for online or remote learning will not be permitted to participate in or attend extra-curricular events or other school functions for safety reasons. (Parents will have to opt in for online or remote learning during registration.) Any exceptions to these guidelines will be considered on an individual basis by the principal.
- Per ISBE and IDPH guidelines, students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear masks during school hours.
- Students and staff will be required to stay home when they are experiencing symptoms related to the COVID-19 virus or if they are ill. We will try to provide mask breaks throughout the day by going outdoors or taking snack breaks when possible.
- **Parents will be provided a checklist so they can certify that their children are symptom free before allowing them to board a school bus.**
- All school buses will be disinfected daily between routes, all students will have assigned seating with family members when possible and all buses must contain fewer than 50 people. Masks must be worn.
- All **visitors to the schools will be limited** as much as possible. All guests will be met at the door and screened prior to being allowed to enter. School personnel will deliver items and serve as the go between so visitors are confined to only one area.
- If students or staff are experiencing symptoms at school, they will be moved to a supervised quarantine location while they await evaluation and pick up.
 - A minimum of 10 days must pass from when the symptoms first appeared and 24 hours must elapse from resolution of a fever without fever reducing medication before returning to school.
 - Those that have had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID 19 or is suspected of having COVID 19 infection should quarantine at home and monitor symptoms for 14 days. If this were to happen the health department would contact you and provide further guidance.
 - We encourage all families and staff to report possible cases (information is confidential) to the school to help monitor for illnesses and for contract tracing purposes.
- Students will need to provide their own face covering which must meet CDC guidelines. Mandatory PPE will be available as needed.
- Social distancing will be practiced at all times to the maximum extent possible. No groupings or gatherings of more than 50 will take place at any times regardless of school or age level.
- All staff will be trained the first week of school on proper protocols for hand washing, proper mask handling, and social distancing. **All students will also receive training on the same 3 protocols and be educated on the reasons for properly doing each.**



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- At MCPS and MCMS when possible, students will remain in their room with their class as much as possible to limit their exposure to other students. Teachers will come to their room when possible.
- Extra classroom, building, and bus cleaning and disinfecting will be in place.

These are just some of the highlights from our “Return to School Plan”. Our plan and protocols may have to be updated to reflect any new guidance and direction from IDPH, CDC or ISBE. This could include moving back to Phase 3 as a State which would mean a return to complete remote learning. All extra-curricular athletic seasons and guidance regarding them will be determined by the IHSA and IESA. This has been and remains to be a very difficult situation for everyone.

We are asking for parents and guardians to partner with us as we work to keep our schools open.

Regardless of your personal feelings about the current situation involving COVID-19, restrictions, masks, etc., we’d ask that you present these guidelines to your students in a positive light. We understand the controversy around wearing a mask and not wearing a mask; however, we can not allow students to attend without them. Please begin working with your children to get them used to wearing a mask for short periods of time. We also ask that if you are in a position to drive your students to school instead of having them ride a bus that you do so. This will help us minimize the number of students on our buses.

In order for this school year to be safe and productive, it will require a team effort between our school and families. We all need to work together and be supportive of each other as we navigate these unprecedented times. We miss our students and very much look forward to seeing them this fall. I think we all need a little return to normal in our lives, and we’re working to provide our students the best possible experience.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Hellrigel".

Todd Hellrigel, Ed.D.
Superintendent