



NCEMS Parents & Guardians,

We are just a few days away from officially beginning the 2020-2021 school year. I cannot even begin to tell you how excited I am to see the students again, to reconnect with them, and to be back together. The last day that school was in-session at NCEMS was March 11, 2020, and we cannot wait to open our doors again! To be back onsite with the kids, teachers, and support staff is a blessing!

This has been the most unusual and challenging time, but I am confident that we will make this a positive and productive year despite the challenges and inconveniences. Parents, your support and understanding with all of the changes that we have had to make are very much appreciated. I recognize and appreciate none of this has been easy, but you have been amazingly supportive. The staff at NCEMS cares so much about your children, and we miss them greatly. Thank you for working with us.

Yesterday, you received the approved USD 115 Return to School Plan and NC Face Mask/Covering Guidelines. Attached in today's email is the NCEMS's Student/Parent Guideline document for returning to school safely with an Onsite Learning Model. These guidelines contain specific information as to how we will strive to keep our students and staff as safe as possible and will be adjusted as necessary. The NCEMS staff has been working diligently to make the necessary changes to mitigate the transmission of the virus and keep everyone safe. Please review the guidelines and let me know if you have any questions.

Additionally, please know that we are underway with developing detailed plans if we are required to move to a Hybrid Learning Model or Remote Learning Model. While we are optimistic we are taking the necessary steps and precautions to remain in an Onsite Learning Model, we must be prepared should we be required to transition to more restrictive models. You may be receiving some additional surveys from us as we fine-tune the details of these plans as we know these more restrictive models create much stress in many families especially those with young children needing childcare.

It is the start of a brand new year, and we do have several new and exciting things planned for this year. Below are some information and announcements that you may find helpful as we begin the 2020-2021 school year:

School Day

- Please note school hours will be changing this year and will be from 8:00 AM to 3:15 PM. Based on the USD 115's new school hours (8:00 AM to 3:15 PM), hours for the Preschool program are the following:
 - AM Section: 8:00 to 11:05
 - PM Section: 12:00 to 3:10

New Staff Members

- We are fortunate to have many awesome new staff members join NCEMS:
 - Ms. Marge Anderson: Paraprofessional
 - Mrs. Madison Broxterman: Kindergarten
 - Ms. Jenna Burger: 1st Grade
 - Mrs. Stephanie Graf: Paraprofessional
 - Mrs. Sheriden Haverkamp: Part-Time Counselor & Paraprofessional
 - Ms. Katie Remy: Paraprofessional
- We still have a few classified staff positions that we are working to fill for the 2020-2021 school year.

NCEMS Site Council

- We are looking for a few new members for the NCEMS Site Council. This group meets four times per year, and those dates are posted on the school calendar. At least for the first semester, we will be meeting via Zoom. If you would like to become a member or learn more information, please contact Dr. Beck at abeck@usd115.org.

NC Thunder App

- If you haven't already done so, please make sure you have Nemaha Central School's app. It's everything THUNDER in your pocket. You will stay updated with access to daily events, news from the school, student stories, and even emergency notifications.
- You can download the app for FREE on both Google Play or the Apple App Store. If you have any questions, contact the school office.

Seesaw & Google Classroom

- We will continue to use Seesaw and Google Classroom to facilitate learning/communication with the students, school, and home. We discovered the importance of having the ability to teach remotely last year, and we will continue to utilize these tools on a regular basis throughout the school year. Your child's classroom teacher will provide more information about these programs to you and your child.

Report Cards for 1st-5th Grades

- There will be a slight change for Report Cards for the 1st-5th graders. Spelling will no longer be listed as a separate subject. While spelling will still be taught, the spelling grades will be part of the English grade.

Updates & Changes with School Curriculum/Programs

As we gear up for the upcoming year, there are a few updates/changes that I want to make you aware of:

- **Pathways to Reading (PTR):** Throughout this summer, our kindergarten, first grade, and Title teachers attended PTR training. This is a systematic phonemic awareness and phonics instruction program, with the main focus of ensuring that the five scientifically validated core components of the reading process (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension) are explicitly taught. This program allows for prevention and intervention strategies to be used throughout our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process.
- **Amplify (Language Arts):** Students in Grades 6-8 will have new Literature and Grammar resources. Both Mr. Hiltgen (Literature) and Mrs. Stallbaumer (Grammar) will be using Amplify. This program includes lots of super-cool materials that we think the students will be excited to use. According to the program, "Amplify ELA is a blended curriculum designed specifically for grades 6–8. With Amplify ELA, students learn to tackle any complex text and make observations, grapple with interesting ideas, and find relevance for themselves. Students are engaged through dynamic texts, lively classroom discussions, and meaningful digital experiences." The teachers are excited about this new program and look forward to sharing it with the students.
- **Eureka Math/Big Ideas Math:** Students in Kindergarten to 4th grade will have a new math program, Eureka Math. The staff spent considerable time last year reviewing various programs and determining the best fit for our students. Eureka Math teaches math concepts so that students have a deep understanding of why math works. Students are taught multiple problem-solving strategies. Classroom teachers will be sharing more information about this program with parents as we begin the new school year.
 - Students in 5th-8th grade will use Big Ideas Math. This is the same program that our 6th-12th graders have used for many years, and the 5th graders will transition to Big Ideas as it is the best fit for that grade level.
- **PowerSchool "MBA Cafe":** USD 115 will be implementing a new meal account program beginning the 20-21 school year. NC Schools will be using PowerSchool "MBA Cafe" as the new meal program and with it will come some changes for parents. First and most importantly, family accounts will no longer be tied together within each building. Each student will have his/her own meal account and funds. We will continue to process one payment per family per NC Building; however, funds will be split equally among family members or specifically per student by parent request. Secondly, student lunch account balances should be able to be seen from parent PowerSchool access. At this time, we do not have an online payment program available.
- **Title I (Super Learning Room):** Title I is a program through which our school district receives federal funding to provide supplemental instruction for students and are based on academic needs in reading and mathematics. This year, NCEMS is designated as a schoolwide (instead of targeted-assistance) allowing us to better provide instruction to meet the specific needs of students with flexible, dynamic, and focused grouping to enhance our MTSS process. Students are given various assessments throughout the year. These assessments, along with classroom performance, provide educators data to address the specific needs of each student. Since we are schoolwide, parental notification of these dynamic instructional groups is not necessary. We will continue to have the Annual Parent I Title meeting during Parent-Teacher Conferences this fall, and all parents are invited to participate. If you have any questions regarding the change to schoolwide or about the Title program, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Tamela Becker, NCEMS Intervention Specialist, (tbecker@usd115.org), or Dr. Beck, (abeck@usd115.org).
- **Parents Right to Know (Title I):** Please note that under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I buildings must provide a "Right to Know" statement. This statement can be found on the school website page. If you have questions about this, please contact Dr. Beck (abeck@usd115.org).

We also are working to get Class Rosters posted and sent to you as soon as possible. Be checking your email!
Thank you for your patience.

Again, please do not hesitate to contact me. I assure you that we will do everything we can to keep your child safe, happy, healthy and learning.

Most sincerely,

Dr. Amy J. Beck