



Barneveld School District

*"...a community striving towards
excellence in education."*

10/16/20

To: Students, Staff, Families, and Community Members

From: Joseph Price, Superintendent

Re: Pivot to Virtual Instruction

Greetings Barneveld Families,

In these most unprecedented times, we have all had to make many sacrifices in both our personal, and professional lives. As you are aware, the spread of Covid-19 continues to rise across the state and we are now seeing this throughout Iowa County. Over the last few weeks, we have been able to quickly identify and isolate specific cohorts and switch them to virtual instruction. This has become increasingly more challenging as the cases in Iowa county have grown to the point where the process of contact tracing is taking much longer. Because of this, we made the determination to switch to virtual instruction yesterday afternoon. This sudden change no doubt leaves many questions and we will continue to be proactive in our communications.

What happened:

We received notification yesterday of positive cases and immediately began the process to isolate specific cohorts. These groups were out of the building by the early afternoon. Because of the nature of "close contacts" and the process of contact tracing taking longer, we made the decision to err on the side of caution and switch to virtual instruction. The practices and safety measures that we have put in place have been effective. We have had a total of () confirmed cases within our school and none of them have been attributed to direct contact here at Barneveld. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure the safety of all and that starts with keeping Covid-19 out of the building to the fullest extent possible.

When will we return to school: (we will remain full virtual next week)

We want the students here as much as possible, but we must do so in a safe and responsible manner. As mentioned above, the tracing process takes substantially longer and as of the writing of this update, it is still incomplete. We will continue with virtual instruction until a return date is determined. Next week is shortened due to in-service days so we will remain virtual.

We have anticipated this happening and were prepared for it - the training and preparation that took place during the summer was very well planned.

How will we support families with limited access to technology:

Access to technology is a challenge for some of our residents. Please contact the school if you need additional assistance. The school has access points throughout the building and if needed, families should be able to receive a signal from the parking lot. We know there are students that absolutely need to be in the building and we will allow these students back on a case by case basis as soon as possible.

What will happen with co-curricular activities and athletics:

All co-curricular and athletic activities are **suspended** effective immediately. This will remain in place until Monday at the very earliest so that we may have the time needed to complete contact tracing and ensure the safety of our students, staff, and community. If it is determined that activities can resume, this will also provide us the time to make effective plans, maintain our cohorting models, and return to school in a responsible manner.

Will it be safe to return to school:

The distancing and safety protocols that we have in place have been effective. Barneveld has experienced fewer cases than any district in the area and none of them have been identified as a direct transmission here at school. The outbreak throughout the state, county, and community is beyond our control and we will continue to make necessary adjustments to prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff.

We have also been more proactive with sending students home who are showing symptoms as well as sending their siblings home and requiring them to stay home until tested, or symptoms subside.

Modified/Reduced Schedule:

The district is considering a modified/reduced schedule to further mitigate the spread of Covid-19. We are actively seeking feedback from our staff, students, and families and you will receive brief surveys. We ask that you take a moment to complete them so that we can make an informed decision at next week's Board meeting on October 21st. This was presented at Wednesday's Board meeting. ([link](#))

What can we do to help:

Community spread has the biggest impact on our efforts to remain in-person. We respectfully ask that you practice social distancing, healthy hand hygiene, wear face coverings, avoid gatherings. We are doing everything we can to keep Barneveld free from Covid-19. The most effective way to accomplish this is to prevent it from entering the building.

Picture Retake Days:

Picture retakes scheduled for October 20, 2000, will be rescheduled. We will keep you informed as to when that date is finalized.

With each new event, we continue to learn from the process and make the necessary changes. We are very fortunate to have been in a position to keep students learning in-person with a virtual option. This has required all of us to make sacrifices on behalf of our students, staff, and community. These are never easy decisions and the most important thing we can do is continue working together, find positives in every situation, and be the example we want to set for our children - they see everything we do.

Thank you again for your continued support - we will get through this together!

[#BeBarneveld](#)

Sincerely,

Joseph Price,
Superintendent