

As you are likely well aware, the numbers in Roseau County have been experiencing new highs lately. As we continue to see case counts rise there are many questions as to the effect on the school and how we deliver our service.

Our planning since this summer and beyond has centered on the ability to present live and in person to as many students and families as possible on a consistent basis, minimizing disruption to the schedules of all. There are a number of reasons for this that I do not need to enumerate including mental health, motivation, and academic gains among others. That being said, we are finding great success in preventing the spread within the school by providing consistent rules and distancing, allowing our students to be present and successful in their learning.

The number of active cases in the County is concerning to many. Our move to Hybrid for the Elementary does not disrupt our daily learning in-person where a distanced model in the High School would. That being said, in consultation with a team composed of experts from the MDH and MDE, we have been advised that, despite increasing numbers in our county, we do NOT need to change our learning models to Distance at this time. While numbers have been on the rise, COVID-19 is still not spreading in our schools.

The decision to change learning models is not based upon a single, objective number or data point. Nor is there a “magic” number that will determine when a model change needs to be made. Instead, schools must examine and analyze a number of “data points” in making this important decision.

Initially, the 14-day rolling average in each county was an important metric schools were directed to use to determine the learning models they should implement at the start of the school year. However, these rolling averages should not be the only metric schools use to determine the need for a model change during the year.

The following data points should also be utilized to inform such a decision now:

- Geographic data about the spread of COVID-19 in the area;
- Demographic data around age groups with positive cases (how many school-aged children have COVID-19?);
- Whether or not community spread is occurring in our school buildings;
- The number of school district employees who are unable to perform their duties due to contracting COVID-19 or needing to quarantine after close contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19;
- Whether school is still a safe place for students to learn and employees to work.

In other words: *Schools are still a safe place for students and employees.*

With that being said, know that we continue to monitor a multitude of factors and remain in consultation with various public health entities as we sift through what is best for our Warroad students, families, and community.

~Dr. Shawn W. Yates