

SDMA COVID-19 School Closure Report

July 13, 2020 Update

- **COVID-19 School Closure- What do we know?**
 - This pandemic continues to be an evolving situation: [CDC website](#).
 - Fifty-eight (58) confirmed cases in Dunn County at the time of this report: [DHS Site](#)- forty-five (45) of the cases have been released from quarantine.
 - [Badger Bounce Back Plan](#)
 - 1) Only three of six indicators hit on Wisconsin's [gating criteria](#).
 - According to [tracking by DHS](#), the current COVID-19 activity level for Dunn County is: High.
 - Social Distancing Guidance for Dunn County remains at: 25 people allowed for indoor gatherings, 50 for outdoor gatherings- may be more than one separate gathering per facility.
 - 1) Still important to monitor symptoms.
 - 2) Still important to wash hands.
 - 3) Still important to maintain social distancing (6') as much as possible.
 - 4) Still important to wear a face covering and/or utilize other mitigation techniques when social distancing cannot be fully achieved.

- **Current Programming in the SDMA:**
 - Graduation
 - An in-person diploma presentation scheduled to be held on July 17.
 - 1) Plans for the presentation are aligned with recommendations from the Dunn County Health Department.
 - Summer School
 - Virtual summer school is in session.
 - In-person summer school is being planned for August.
 - [Free Meals for Kids](#)- scheduled through August 27

- **Reopening the SDMA-** Ongoing communications with the Dunn County Department of Health Services. DHS plans to continue offering guidance rather than issuing legal orders: Discretionary mitigation efforts in the SDMA will help reduce risk, but effectiveness will be impacted greatly based on decisions and

actions by each student, staff member, and family.

- **Phase I-** SDMA offices and facilities were open to the public for essential functions and approved activities with restrictions beginning on July 1, 2020.
- **Phase II-** Planning the 2020-2021 School Year
 - A planning team has established- including at least one staff representative from each building level.
 - 1) Meetings scheduled: June 17, July 1, July 15, July 29, TBD
 - [More guidance](#) from the Department of Public Instruction was received on June 22. It is anticipated that the DPI guidance will continue to be modified every two weeks.
 - Three primary reopening scenarios are being considered:
 - 1) In-Person Learning- Buildings open with full enrollment.
 - 2) Virtual Learning- Remote instruction.
 - 3) Blended option- a mix of in-person and virtual instruction- schools open with reduced enrollment allowed.

***The SDMA plans to offer 4K-12 virtual learning for families not comfortable with in-person reopening plans.
 - Family and staff surveys administered at the beginning of the month provided the following direction (statistics are included at the end of this report):
 - 1) Families and staff prefer that the SDMA open with some safety measures in place.
 - 2) The most preferred safety measures by families included:
 - a) Social distancing emphasized as much as practical for students and staff.
 - b) All students and staff screened for symptoms each day (temperature check, etc.).
 - c) Limit the number of visitors and volunteers at schools.
 - d) Reduce large gatherings of students (lunch, assemblies, etc.)
 - e) The use of face coverings required only as needed (buses, hallway transitions, some classrooms, etc.)
 - 3) The most preferred safety measures by SDMA staff included:
 - a) Limit the number of visitors and volunteers at schools.

- b) Reduce large gatherings of students (lunch, assemblies, etc.)
 - c) Social distancing emphasized as much as practical for students and staff.
 - d) All students and staff screened for symptoms each day (temperature check, etc.).
 - e) Grouping (Cohorting) of students to reduce the amount of contact with others.
 - A reopening plan will be presented to the Board for consideration on July 27.
 - Next steps will include:
 - 1) Hiring additional staffing for the plan.
 - 2) Developing building-level protocols aligned with the plan.
 - 3) Registering students who choose the virtual option.
 - Additional computers, hotspots, PPE, and cleaning supplies have been ordered.
 - The SDMA will be utilizing consistent online learning management systems in 2020-2021- **SeeSaw (4K-2), GoogleClassroom (3-12)**.
- **Phase III- Post-Pandemic- TBD**

SDMA Family and Staff Survey Summary

The family and staff surveys indicate that if possible, families and staff really want the SDMA to open up schools for in-person learning with full enrollment (classes five days per week). In-person schooling was selected by the most people (62%) as an acceptable option for next school year [1,508 total- Families 1,355 (62%) and Staff 153 (59%)]. A blended/reduced enrollment option with alternating schedules was an acceptable option for 34% [819 total- Families 692 (32%) and Staff 127 (49%)], and the remote/at-home learning option was an acceptable option for only 17% [411 total- Families 353 (16%) and Staff 58 (22%)]. While not ideal, 41% indicated that they could make a blended option with an alternating schedule work if need be [1,002 total- Families 898 (41%) and Staff 104 (40%)].

The district will still continue planning for both the virtual and blended instructional options, but both families (2,171 surveys completed) and staff (258 surveys completed) indicated that reopening should include in-person learning with some increased safety measures*. The safety measures listed below are in the order of the total selections in the Family/Staff surveys).

- a. Social distancing emphasized as much as practical for students and staff [58%- 1,400 total- Families 1,223 (57%) and Staff 177 (69%)]
- b. All students and staff screened for symptoms each day (temperature check, etc.). [57%- 1,392 total- Families 1,216 (56%) and Staff 176 (68%)]
- c. Limit the number of visitors and volunteers at schools. [54%- 1,316 total- Families 1,124 (52%) and Staff 193 (75%)]
- d. Reduce large gatherings of students (lunch, assemblies, etc.) [52%- 1,261 total- Families 1,076 (50%) and Staff 185 (72%)]
- e. The use of face coverings required only as needed (buses, hallway transitions, some classrooms, etc.) [38%- 918 total- Families 809 (37.5%) and Staff 109 (42%)]
- f. Grouping (cohorting) of students to reduce the amount of contact with others [36%- 886 total- Families 746 (35%) and Staff 140 (54%)]

*35% [817 families responses (38%) and 34 staff member responses (13%)] indicated feeling comfortable having school with no additional safety measures in place.

In continued discussions with KT Gallagher, the Dunn County Public Health Director, the rising number of COVID-19 cases in our area may make it quite difficult to reopen schools at full capacity if the current trend continues. While the health and safety of all students, families, and staff is everyone's greatest concern, the county's limited ability to conduct contact tracing is also an important consideration. If strict social distancing (at least 6') is required in all classrooms, it might be unlikely that the SDMA will be able to open all schools at full capacity. The combination of other mitigation measures like screening for symptoms and the expanded use of face coverings in our schools might be an acceptable alternative to strict social distancing, but more discussions will be needed to establish reopening thresholds and acceptable mitigation measures.

When respondents were asked about which safety precautions they want to see in place in the fall, only 27% selected the option to require face coverings for students at all times in school [660 total-

Families 554 (26%) and Staff 106 (41%)]. The idea of mandatory mask use has been discussed with colleagues and parents from both inside our school district and outside of the SDMA, and this definitely is one of the greatest areas of disagreement. It appears that the strict use of face coverings could have a substantial impact in reducing the spread of the virus, but there are also some real concerns about requiring face masks in our schools. A mandatory face covering policy could be very difficult to enforce, but allowing the voluntary use of face coverings might not be enough mitigation for opening all schools with full capacity on September 1.