



## **Menomonie Education Association**

August 9, 2021

To: Dr. Zydowsky, President Styer and Members of the SDMA Board

From: The Menomonie Education Association

The Menomonie Education Association believes that no student should have to sacrifice their health or safety in order to access a great public education.

We call upon the Menomonie Board of Education to include health and safety recommendations supported by the National Center for Disease Control, the Wisconsin Department of Health, and the Dunn County Health Department as they adopt their plan for the 2021-22 school year.

Key takeaways from the CDC plan currently include the following:

- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.
- Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.
- Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.
- In addition to universal indoor masking, CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as screening testing.
- Screening testing, ventilation, hand-washing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
- Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.



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- Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and other members of their households and support in-person learning.
- Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing).

Of particular interest to us as educators is the role masks play in exclusions. Should we have a positive case in any of our schools, and the positive and close contacts are appropriately masked, the close contacts will not need to be quarantined. Simply put, wearing masks will make face to face education an option for more students than the previous plan of optional masking.

The MEA is hopeful that transmission of Covid-19 will again decrease in Dunn County, but in order to prioritize in-person instruction for the greatest number of students we are hopeful that the board will consider incorporating the health and safety parameters necessary for this to occur.