

Dear Norse Nation:



Hello - we hope this communication finds you happy and healthy! As we have shared prior, we utilize the minds of many stakeholders to help drive the decision of our learning plan. We currently have approximately 89% of students engaged in our Hybrid Program and the other 11% of students in our Norse Virtual Academy.

While not ideal and not what any of us fully desire, we believe this has been the best option during phase 4 of the State of Michigan MI Safe Start Plan, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

No doubt, we're experiencing a community spike in COVID-19 cases and also the need for some individuals to quarantine. At this point, we are fortunate to be the only public school in our county to have no students or staff report a positive test and we hope this continues. You may recall a communication from me a couple of weeks ago relative to a positive student test. This report was verified as a false positive by the health department.

Yesterday, I met with superintendents countywide and two professionals from Mercy Health including their Chief Medical Officer and their Director of Infectious Disease. Wednesday, this same group will be meeting along with officials from Public Health - Muskegon County to explore a coordinated Muskegon County mitigation strategy for COVID-19. Local schools continue to look for guidance from the experts. What we know is that more people are testing positive creating more close contacts (and more temporary remote learners). We also learned that Mercy Health is nearing capacity for their beds with 25% of their in-patients being COVID-related.

Whether we agree with them or not, our protocols used to mitigate the virus seem to be working at NMPS. At this point, all of the "spread" or "transmission" that we are aware of has come in less structured environments occurring outside of school in situations where social distancing and masking are not being practiced with fidelity. I urge us all to be stringent with our expectations. Please note, any individuals/groups/teams/other not adhering fully to our safety expectations will be handled on an individual basis with the potential of cancelation of impacted activity/opportunity.

We must follow all of our known precautions to stay safe and healthy:

1. Washing hands regularly with soap and water
2. Using hand sanitizer
3. Wearing a mask at all times
4. Staying at least six feet from other people/maintain a safe distance

With the uptick of positive tests and thus the quarantining impact of students and staff, we must continue to prepare for the potential that we may have to take a step towards less face-to-face time with our educational programming. As stated prior in this communication piece - our original plan was set to assist in avoiding this potential. However, we must prepare for impacts out of our control. Hopefully we do not have to make this move, but more information on this potential impact will be sent out soon. This will assist all in preparing for what may be ahead of us in the near future.

We are hopeful this communication is taken as it is intended - to do all we can to protect each other and prepare ourselves as needed. We are in this together and the safer we are the quicker we return to more normalcy. Thank you for doing your part!

Take care!

Dr. Babcock