



November 9, 2020

Hello Madison families,

Like lots of you, we are monitoring the county and state COVID-19 numbers and see both the rise in the number of cases and the recent change in the color of our county's status. We are also closely monitoring our internal district data daily as that is what will actually determine how we decide to remain open or close schools. We are very confident in our internal processes and know that our school nurses are doing an incredible job of monitoring several other data points specific to our schools.

Late last evening the decision was made to utilize a virtual learning day at MCHS (only) today as a result of staff shortages. From the beginning of the school year, we knew that if we had staff out for any reason (scheduled professional development, personal day, non-COVID related illness, or medical reason) that would be complicated by any precautionary quarantine situation. We realized early on that this would make us more vulnerable to a potential closing as we are extremely short on available substitute teachers. While each year we struggle to find subs, the conditions around COVID-19 have made this year a particularly challenging climate for finding any type of additional personnel.

With that said, overall our student and staff population, district wide, are in good shape and staying safe. We have had positive cases reported and we have quarantined students and staff as a result. According to our records and the contact tracing data provided, we can say with confidence that our internal safety protocols and procedures are working well.

Whenever quarantining has become necessary we have followed proven, successful contact tracing protocols in conjunction with the health professionals in our community. If you are not contacted, you are not directly impacted. We use an abundance of caution as these procedures are followed and our nursing professionals have been exceptional during this challenging time! Our nursing professionals are in contact with impacted families with specific health-related information. Our teachers are in direct contact with impacted families regarding the instructional shift and needs of each individual student.

Whenever it has been necessary to quarantine we have worked to keep asymptomatic students/classrooms and teachers together shifting them between face-to-face and virtual, if it is in the best interest of all students impacted. We have found both students and teachers benefit from staying together and better stay on track when this practice is implemented. If students are quarantined and symptomatic, our teachers and nursing staff work closely with those particular students and families to ensure all needs are met from the academic perspective.

Our teachers, nurses, custodians, bus drivers, food service teams, support personnel, coaches, and STUDENTS are going above and beyond each and every single day. Everyone in this district is committed to making sure that we are doing all we can to create and provide the best and safest environment possible. We strongly believe our best educational environment is for our students to be in our classrooms, face-to-face with their peers and teachers, in order to learn, grow, and simply enjoy being in school.

At this time, our goal and intent is to remain open for business with students in our classrooms face-to-face where we feel they belong. **However, we need your help.** We are to a point where we are facing some tough decisions. It will take all of us working together to remain diligent...to make the decision to wear our masks, wash out hands, and most importantly limit ourselves to our small groups outside of school hours. *While this may be a small inconvenience and not ideal, we are to a point where our collective out of school activities and decisions will continue to impact our county data and begin to drive school-based decisions.*

The decisions we make as families moving forward will not only impact academic instruction models, but also extracurricular and athletic activities.

Longer-term, we are in the process of evaluating the entire virtual program to assess best practices, areas for improvement, and overall student success. Due to how close we are to the end of the semester and the fact that our Covid data is still very good, we are not going to shift strategies at this time. Face-to-face students should remain in that mode until/unless we have determined a need to move to virtual learning. In the coming days, we will be announcing enrollment options for the second semester should families wish to switch to virtual learning for the second semester.

We pledge that we will continue to do all we can to monitor data, track the health and well-being of students and staff who may become ill, and make responsible decisions based on our data and what is best for our families. There are limitations to what information we can share when it comes to matters of health and identification. There are laws that prohibit the sharing of specific information that identifies any individual and their health related matters.

Thank you for entrusting your children's education with Madison Consolidated Schools! It has been a difficult last several months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we feel that our entire school community has risen to the challenge and have provided a high-quality education for every student. Thank you for your ongoing support and stay safe.

Sincerely,

Dr. Studebaker
Superintendent
Madison Consolidated School Corporation