

10/23/2020

Dear parents and staff of Pepin Area School District:

I received official confirmation today that we had a positive case of COVID-19 in our school district.

A 5th grade student has tested positive for COVID-19. Given that we are not more than 14 days from the first positive case in that class, we cannot rule out that transmission occurred at school. These two events could be related. The current positive student has not had any contact with staff or our students for well over 48 hours before the onset of symptoms and the positive test result. Given this fact, given the best research we have, no transmission should have occurred at school from the 2nd positive case.

We are asking that all families monitor the health of your children and if symptomatic, please have them stay home and tested for COVID-19. The district will provide educational activities for those students through our hybrid model, where your child will live stream into the classroom until they receive a negative test result and/or complete their quarantine period as ordered by the county health department.

We were blessed with no positive cases the first six weeks of school. I believe that is a credit to the community as a whole and the proactive actions we are taking at school to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 at the school. Staff, students and the community are to be commended.

As I stated in our roll out of our reopening plan in August, Pepin Area Schools can only mitigate the transmission of COVID-19. We cannot prevent the spread of this virus. This is particularly difficult because a student or staff member could be infected and be asymptomatic. This is why we wear masks and do proactive cleaning and sanitization of our school each and every day.

While I would like to promise you that there will be no further transmission of COVID-19 in our school, that is simply not the reality we live in. There will be more cases as we proceed. We are committed to keeping in-person learning going for as long as we can, but also need parents to be prepared for stops and starts as we head through the year. In consultation with Pepin County Health, we are not at that point yet, but this will be much more difficult as we head into the winter, where we are not able to be outside as much and spending more time indoors.

Please remember that we are currently offering three learning options as a school district:

- 1) In-Person where students attend school as normal and follow all safety guidelines.
- 2) Hybrid where a student live streams classes from home.
- 3) Virtual where students work independently through Educere.

We will continue to make all efforts to provide in person learning for students here at school, but will also respect your decisions as a family if you choose the hybrid or virtual options

Please remember that the school district can not disclose the name(s) of student(s) who test positive. The Pepin County Health Department will be in contact with you if your son or daughter was a direct contact and needs to quarantine for 14 days from the date of the direct contact.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus that is spread even before individuals show symptoms. It spreads from person to person through droplets created when we cough, sneeze, talk, sing or laugh. Thus, it is ever important for all students, family members, and staff members to closely watch for symptoms that are outside of their "normal," and to stay home if they are ill. If symptoms occur, please contact your medical provider to request testing.

Please remember to slow the spread of COVID-19:

- 1) Stay home when ill.
- 2) Wear a face covering when in public.
- 3) Wash hands frequently with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable.
- 4) Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, etc.
- 5) Limit unnecessary travel, events, or large gatherings.

We all need to continue to do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19, and to keep our students and staff members safe.

Thank you for your continued support as we navigate through this pandemic together.

Sincerely,

Bruce Quinton, District Administrator
Pepin Area Schools