

For Immediate Release

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COVID Update Regarding Use of Masks and Instructional Model

Ripon, WI – On September 23, 2020, Ripon Superintendent Mary Whitrock shared the following message with families regarding the use of masks and instructional model schools in the district will follow:

“Dear Families,

Thank you for your help in continuing to keep Ripon’s schools as safe as possible given the local and county increases in COVID cases. We have been able to open our schools with face to face instruction at 4K- Grade 5 and with the blended model in Grades 6-12 and keep our schools open. That is our goal. We have done this despite neighboring districts shifting back to an all virtual model.

On September 3, I noted COVID related data during the first few weeks of school would be reviewed to determine any district-wide changes in our instruction. Due to the local, community, and county spike in COVID cases, Ripon will continue to remain in our current model of instruction for the foreseeable future. The School Board, at their meeting last evening, did approve the continued use of masks for all students and staff and any other visitors in district buildings. The Board requested updates at their regular monthly meetings with regards to the use of masks and any consideration to shift to face to face instruction in Grades 6-12. This morning, Governor Evers issued an [Executive Order #90](#) declaring a health emergency which extends the mask mandate, [Emergency Order #1](#), for an additional 60 days.

What does that mean for your child?

- *4K-Grade 5 will continue to meet face-to-face with masks required for all students and staff.*
- *Grades 6-12 will continue to meet with the blended/cohort model with masks required for all students and staff.*

- *The school Board will receive an update and a recommendation regarding mask and model of instruction at their regular meeting each month.*

Could my child's learning model change before the October School Board meeting?

- *Individual students and staff may be required to quarantine per the health department.*
- *An elementary classroom may shift to virtual learning if the teacher or multiple students are required to quarantine per the health department.*
- *A school may shift to virtual learning for up to 14 days for cleaning, to separate the student body/faculty if there is any indication the virus is spreading in a school, if there is not adequate staff to keep the building open or if Fond du Lac County Health Department (FCHD) needs to complete extensive contact tracing (i.e. if there is some large event in the community which causes the need for contact tracing on a broad scale).*

Where can I find data about COVID and its impact on schools, community and county?

Please find information about COVID by visiting the [RASD COVID Road to Re-Entry](#), the [District COVID-19 Dashboard](#) and/or the [Fond du Lac County Health Department](#) websites.

How can families help to keep our schools open?

- *Wear masks and practice social distancing when you need to be out in the community;*
- *Avoid social gatherings, especially large gatherings, where masks are not being worn;*
- *Keep child(ren) home when they are sick and notifying their child's school with any concerns of potential exposures (this has been fairly good so far); and*
- *Wash hands frequently and use hand sanitizer.*

I appreciate everyone's efforts to support our students and staff by following the FCHD recommendations so we can keep our schools open and/or open them further now that we have started the school year."

Any questions about the event should be directed to Superintendent Mary Whitrock at (920) 748-4600.

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