



# Smart Restart Update

11.2.2020

Dear Fargo Public Schools Families and Staff,

On November 2, the Fargo Public Schools (FPS) COVID-19 Instructional Plan Committee met. The committee reviewed data and discussed what protocols and changes need to be made in our schools to achieve the FPS COVID-19 Instructional Plan Committee's goal to bring students back to the classroom for full-time in-person instruction while also upholding the four guiding principles of the committee, which include ensuring the safety and well-being of all students and employees.

Additionally, a return to in-person instruction plan was presented to the committee. This plan was developed with guidance from Fargo Cass Public Health. The plan includes additional mitigation strategies that will be employed by Fargo Public Schools with a phased in-approach to in-person instruction.

The committee voted to adopt the plan. The plan includes a **tentative** timeline to return to in-person instruction five days a week. The timeline below is a **goal** but is subject to change as the committee continues to review data and guidance specific to COVID-19.

## **Elementary Schools: Level 4 – In-Person Instruction (4 days per week) until November 30**

At their meeting on November 16, the FPS COVID-19 Instructional Plan Committee will decide on transitioning to in-person instruction five days a week based on the number of elementary students quarantined or isolated.

In-person instruction four days a week allows the opportunity for FPS staff to connect and support students that are quarantined or isolated during the distance learning day for all other students.

Therefore, transitioning to five days a week with a significant number of students continuing to be quarantined or isolated can create additional gaps for learning loss.

- If the committee decides that elementary schools will remain in in-person instruction four days a week, this decision will be in effect until at least January 19, 2021 to provide consistency the rest of the semester.

## **Middle Schools: Level 3 – Hybrid Learning and Level 4 – In-Person Instruction (4 days per week) until January 19 using a grade level phased-in approach**

**Starting Monday, November 30, 2020, sixth grade students** will transition to in-person instruction four days a week. Seventh and eighth grade students will remain in their current hybrid model.

**Starting Monday, December 14, 2020, seventh grade students** will transition to in-person instruction four days a week. Eighth grade students will remain in their current hybrid model.

**Starting Tuesday, January 19, 2021, eighth grade students** will transition to in-person instruction four days a week.



### **High Schools: Level 3 – Hybrid Learning until January 19, 2021**

Due to the complexity of high school schedules and classes requiring credit for graduation, a grade level phased-in approach cannot be implemented the same way it can for middle school. High school students will remain in Level 3 – Hybrid Learning until at least January 19.

The FPS COVID-19 Instructional Plan Committee's adopted plan sets a goal of returning to in-person instruction for all grade levels five days a week beginning the second semester, which begins on January 19, 2021. At times, Fargo Public Schools may need to transition one or multiple buildings to distance learning for set periods of time due to staffing shortages.

Though the committee adopted a plan with an established timeline as a goal, it is important to know that the committee will adapt and make changes based on new information or guidance, if needed. **The timeline referenced above is the goal of the plan that was adopted.** If guidance and data require a change or delay in this plan, the committee can exercise that option at future meetings.

The goal of the Fargo Public Schools COVID-19 Instructional Plan Committee is to help Fargo Public Schools reach Level 5, where all students and staff can safely return to in-person instruction. We appreciate all families and staff members of Fargo Public Schools for their grace, understanding, and flexibility.

As stated in my last update, we are all in this together. One of the most difficult challenges for the committee is that though data and research is showing that schools are not super spreaders of COVID-19, we have a high number of staff and students out of school due to the spread in our community. Therefore, our ability to provide in-person instruction five days a week can be dependent on the number of cases in our county and the exposure to our students and staff outside of school. I urge all of us to make the best choices as possible for us to remain able to educate our students in person. Please follow recommendations and protocols to help stop the spread of COVID-19 – stay at home when not feeling well, wear a mask when around others within six feet, and wash hands frequently. As we enter the cold and flu season, these simple steps will be crucial to our ability to educate students in-person. This is a time to come together as a community and do all we can to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Rupak Gandhi, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

