

YME Schools Community -

I think it goes without saying that we are living in unprecedented times. Things are changing rapidly around us and we need to remain nimble enough to adjust our plans to meet the needs of all of our stakeholders.

The health and safety of our students, staff members, and community have been forefront in our minds as this plan was developed over the past 3 months. Many people provided input and helped to examine the many different angles that should be considered. Everyone's input was weighed carefully to develop this plan. But, it is important to remember that our plans represent what we believe to be the best options for our district and may not align with other schools or districts.

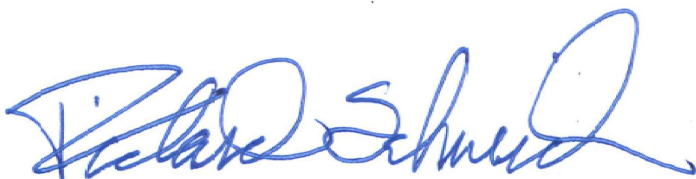
Our survey data indicates that families prefer to return to on-site (in-person or hybrid) models for the students. Our plans reflect the desire to support this preference but also reflect the necessity for safety for students and staff members.

I am confident in the ability and work ethic of our staff members to provide the best education possible in the safest manner. It is important that we work together to make sacrifices because the choices we make now will impact our future. We ask that you make an extra effort to help ensure that we continue to have this opportunity by adhering to the following:

- Wear a face covering
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Practice social distancing
- Frequently wash your hands
- Stay home if you feel sick

As we embark on the 2020-21 school year, we expect that we will have challenges. This plan is not perfect, but please be assured, a great deal of time and effort went into developing it. Working together will help ensure that we have a successful plan moving forward and as always, thank you for choosing the YME School District.

Yours in Education,



Rich Schneider, YME Superintendent



Background:

In March 2020, Yellow Medicine East School District closed its school buildings to in-person instruction due to the COVID-19 outbreak and Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-02, issued March 15, 2020. For the remainder of the spring semester, students received instruction through distance learning, essential workers received child care, and meals were provided.

Schools were asked to develop three different scenarios for the 2020-21 school year:

- Scenario 1 - In-Person Learning
- Scenario 2 - Hybrid Learning
- Scenario 3 - Distance Learning

The YME Return to Learning Plan is based upon the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH) *2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools*, Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) *Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools: 2020-2021 School Year Planning*, and current public health recommendations from Countryside Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The following recommendations were used to guide our work:

- Maintain a safe distance of 6 feet between individuals
- Wear face masks or coverings
- Screen for COVID-19 symptoms*
- Practice good hygiene protocols, including hand washing, cleaning and disinfecting
- Cover sneezes and coughs
- Limit group gatherings
- Plan for short-term school closures should there be a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case

PLEASE NOTE: This document is a working document that will be updated as changes occur. Guidance from public health officials is likely to change as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. This plan will outline the general methods YME School District will utilize in these three scenarios (in-person, hybrid, and distance learning). Details of each plan will be provided on our district website.

*COVID-19 Symptoms: New-onset cough or shortness of breath by themselves OR at least 2 of the following:

- fever (100.4°F or higher)
- Chills
- muscle pain
- sore throat
- loss of sense of smell or taste,
- gastrointestinal symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea.

Close Physical Contact:

- within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes
- provided care at home to someone sick with COVID-19
- had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged, or kissed)
- shared eating/drinking utensils or they sneezed, coughed, or got respiratory droplets on you

Communication

YME School District conducted several surveys of parents and staff members to collect input on how to safely reopen our schools for the 2020-2021 school year. The following surveys were conducted:

- YME Distance Learning Family/Caregiver Survey (all parents/caregivers)
- YME Staff Fall School Re-entry Survey (all staff members)
- Yellow Medicine East Fall School Re-entry Survey (all parents/caregivers)
- Stakeholder Feedback Form (parents, staff, students, and community members)

Superintendent Rich Schneider will serve as the point of contact for all COVID-19 related matters. In his unavailability, BRE Principal Lisa Hansen will act accordingly.

Communication Methods:

The YME School District will release communications updates in using the following methods:

- Email from Superintendent Schneider to all staff
- Information will be provided on the school website (<https://www.isd2190.org/>), Yellow Medicine East Schools Facebook page, and Twitter (@YMESchools)
- Email from Superintendent Schneider and building principals to all parents/guardians
- Email from building principals to students and staff members
- JMC Messenger will be utilized to provide parents/guardians and staff with immediate updates through email, text message, and voice messages when necessary.

Self Reporting:

YME School District will request parents, guardians, and staff members to self-report to our school nurse (Cassie Suter) or your building principal, if they or their student has COVID-19 symptoms, has a positive test for COVID-19, or has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Questions about health-related concerns should also be directed to Nurse Suter.

YME School Nurse: Cassie Suter
 320-564-4081
 csuter@isd2190.org

Posters will be posted throughout the facility addressing the following:

- Mask requirements for all occupants (students and staff members) and visitors will be posted on entry doors
- Handwashing reminders near handwashing stations (bathrooms, locker rooms, etc.)
- COVID-19 symptoms will be posted at each entrance
- Expectations for screening for COVID-19 symptoms

Mandatory Face Covering

The health of all students and staff members is vital to a successful educational program. Since the virus is known to be transmitted through saliva and mucus, face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer does not know they are infected. In other words, wearing a mask can protect others from possible unnecessary transmission and/or exposure. It is important to note that due to their age, staff members are more vulnerable to the virus and represent a limited resource. We want to especially ensure that staff members remain safe and healthy.

With this in mind, all students, staff, and other people present in school buildings and district offices or riding on school transportation vehicles are required to wear a face-covering or mask. Students will be expected to wear their masks throughout the day except when drinking and eating. Students unwilling to comply may be assigned to distance learning. Visitors unwilling to comply will be asked to leave the building. Staff members who do not comply will be dealt with through the use of progressive discipline.

Any student or staff member unable to wear a mask will be required to provide documentation from a medical care provider that outlines the disability. Individuals unable to wear masks will be issued a face shield that will be worn throughout the day (while indoors).

Mental Health & Wellness:

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing stress, fear, and anxiety for many people. The district will provide staff, families, and students (age-appropriate) with information on how to access resources for mental health and wellness in the following ways: YME School District mental health professionals:

- Sue Bones, MS/HS Social Worker
- Tammy Carruth, BRE Social Worker
- Amy Engesser, YME Psychologist
- Yellow Medicine County Family School Support Worker

- Chippewa County Family School Support Worker

Staff Member Mental Health Supports (further information may be obtained from HR Director, Tara Miller):

FREE RESOURCE TO MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN: Learn to Live offers support for you this summer and throughout the year. Take a 5-minute, confidential assessment, start a self-paced CBT program for Stress, Anxiety, & Worry, Depression, Social Anxiety, Insomnia, or Substance Use – and even **connect with a Learn to Live Coach**. Employees and family members (ages 13 and older) on MHC’s health plan can participate for free. We have tools, [new video topics](#), and resources that can help you in just 5 minutes a day. Visit learntolive.com/partners and use the free code **MHC** to get started. If you’re already a member, [log into your account](#) to continue or to start a new program.

As an employee, you also have free access to our Employee Assistance Program. Everyday life can be stressful and can affect your health, well-being, and performance. Fortunately, our Employee Assistance Program can aid in finding solutions. When facing personal problems, you might struggle with where to turn for help. The first step is usually the hardest, and guidance is often the key. That’s why National Insurance Services (NIS) offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). An EAP offers a confidential place to find the answers that work for you. No problem is too large or too small. Contact the EAP for assistance by phone 866.451.5465 or check out their website at www.niseap.com.

Training and Education

Maintenance & Custodial Staff:

- Cleaning methods and schedule
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Right to Know
- Mandatory Reporting
- Bloodborne Pathogen

Food Service

- Cleaning methods and schedule
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Right to Know
- Mandatory Reporting
- Bloodborne Pathogen

Teachers and Paraprofessionals

- Right to Know
- Mandatory Reporting
- Title IX
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Password Security

Transportation Personnel (handled by Bennett-Bennett Transportation)

- Cleaning methods and schedule

Students

- Handwashing Techniques
- Mitigations for COVID-19
- Symptoms of COVID-19
- Proper Use and Care of Technology

Parent, guardians or caregivers

- How to screen for symptoms of COVID-19
- Proper Use and Care of Technology

Screening for Symptoms of COVID-19

Staff Members:

MDH and CDC recommend that people are screened before or upon entering a building. A poster outlining the symptoms will be posted at each entrance. YME will conduct proactive screenings of all staff members. Staff members will log their data through the use of a google form ([YME Daily Health Assessment Self-Reporting](#)) which will aid in monitoring staff health and a tool for contact tracing. Staff members are strongly encouraged to complete this form at home before reporting to the building. Stations for collecting this information will be located in each building. The following information is collected:

- Name (first and last)
- Date
- Temperature
- Have you been in contact with someone who was diagnosed or suspected to have COVID-19 within the last 14 days? (If yes- contact Nurse Cassie for exclusion guidelines)
- Have you had ANY of the following symptoms: fever of 100.4° or higher, new or increased cough in the last 7 days, or shortness of breath? (If yes- contact Nurse Cassie for exclusion guidelines)

- Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms? (Check all that apply) *Contact Nurse Cassie if you are experiencing any symptoms*
 - Chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting

Students:

Parents, family members, caregivers or the students themselves are asked to screen for the symptoms of COVID-19 before entering the building.

Staff Protocol for Accommodations:

Accommodations:

Staff members requesting accommodations to their work environment should contact their building principal, human resource director or the superintendent. Requests for exceptions for staff members to the expectations for screening and masking requirements, should also consult with the director of human resources, superintendent, or their building principal. Exceptions for masking requirements for students should be directed to the building principals. Please note that medical documentation may be requested and/or required.

Learning Plans*

All learning will reflect these goals and expectations:

- Promote social distancing
- Minimal mixing between cohorts/pods/groups
- Space seating/desks as much as possible, using 6 foot guidance
- Turn desks/tables to face the same direction
- Limit sharing of materials, including devices, toys, books, games or learning aids
- Promote healthy hygiene practices
- Teach and encourage washing hands
- Wearing and proper use of masks
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Shared items will be cleaned/disinfected between use or completely eliminated
- Classrooms will be assessed individually to increase floor space by eliminating non-essential items
- Seating arrangements will be designated by the supervising teacher/staff member

***Note - detailed plans are found on our district website.**

BRE Learning Plans Summary:

BRE in-person and hybrid models will reflect the desire to increase social distancing and minimize the number of interactions between and among students and staff members. Cohorting will eliminate the need for students to move excessively during the day and both models will have common expectations. Each plan will also be posted separately to our school website. BRE's full in-person/hybrid plan can be viewed [here](#).

MS/HS Learning Plans Summary:

MS/HS in-person models will allow all students to attend school every day. The hybrid model will have students attending class every day and the high school students attending every other day based upon their last name. Students needing additional time at school due to special education services (IEP or 504 plans) will be able to continue in an everyday format. Students that do not have access to adequate wifi/internet at home to support online learning, will be able to coordinate with the MS/HS office to attend classes at school in an internet cafe format. Classes for distance learning will be provided in a synchronous format. MS/HS's full plan can be viewed [here](#).

Childcare

Childcare will be provided to Tier 1 essential workers during distance learning as outlined in the Governor's Executive Order 20-82 and the MDE 2020-21 School Year Planning Guide. Safe Learning Plan for 2020-21.

Transportation

Parents will be strongly encouraged to provide transportation for their students and/or household units. Parents should not drop off their students until after 8:00 am. Drop off locations will be communicated to parents and caregivers. Upon arrival at school, students will immediately report to their classroom (BRE - grade-level classrooms, MS/HS - first-period class).

When riding on buses, vans, or school-owned vehicles, all drivers and riders will be expected to be masked. During in-person learning models, all riders will ride one per seat with the exception of members of the same household who may occupy the same seat. Riders will be able to ride every other row in the hybrid model. Windows will remain open throughout the trip in all scenarios to improve ventilation. The number of windows will be impacted by outdoor weather conditions such as temperature and precipitation. Seating charts will be established and the bus will be filled from the back to the front. Egress will occur one at a time to keep spacing and decrease the likelihood of close contact. Students unable or unwilling to comply with masking requirements will not be transported (with the exception of students with known disabilities which do not allow them to properly wear a mask or face shield).

Building Cleaning and Sanitation:

Custodians, food service workers, paraprofessionals, teachers, and all staff will be instructed on the proper methods for cleaning and sanitizing. All water fountains will be closed and bottle fillers will be open. Students and staff will provide their own water bottle. This information will be provided to staff members as part of the back to school training.

YME uses the MN Schools K-12 Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidebook COVID-19/Respiratory or Influenza Outbreak for guidance and direction on proper cleaning processes. A copy of the guidebook is available by requesting the YME Superintendent office.

The following items will be cleaned and disinfected 3 times per day:

- Door handles of classrooms, locker rooms, bathrooms, and entrances
- Bottle fillers
- Front office counters (BRE, MS/HS & District)
- Handrails
- Light switches
- Elevator buttons

The following areas will be cleaned and disinfected a minimum of 1 time per day

- Conference room tables & chair armrests/grip areas
- Office desks (BRE, MS/HS & District)
- Appliance handles in break rooms
- Table and student desktops
- Chairs and chair handles/grabs
- Cabinet handles/pulls
- Classroom sink faucets

Teachers, paraprofessionals, or supervisors will clean the following between cohorts:

- Desk tops
- Door handles
- Any items that were touched
- High touch surfaces
- Shared equipment (paint brushes, tools, etc.)