

COVID-19 Updates

On July 30th, Governor Tim Walz announced that school districts for the 2020-21 school year will determine their own fall learning. Those options include: 1) In-Person 2) Hybrid and 3) Distance Learning. All Minnesota school districts were to collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the Minnesota Department of Health, and their local county public health department in making a fall school opening determination. This decision would be based on a variety of factors including county-level COVID case metrics and available local district resources that ensure safety given specific health guidelines. MDE published the [Safe Learning Plan](#) which is a guide all districts will use during the 2020-21 school year to guide their decision making.

As a result, Zumbro Education District announced their intended Fall 2020 return to school plan on 8/11/20. ZED plans to have an “Elementary In-Person and Middle/High School Hybrid” model for the fall class opening on Tuesday, September 8th. This would be for our ZED South Campus, ZED ALC, and Transition 2 Success programs. Please refer to the “Fall 2020 Return To School Plan” section on the left for more details. ZED plans to update this section in the coming days with a full plan prior to school starting.

What if I do not feel comfortable sending my student(s) to the school building for in-person learning, but my school’s learning model includes in-person learning?

Regardless of which learning model is being implemented at the ZED school sites, all families have the option to opt-out and go with distance learning for their child. ZED will be providing a distance-learning program throughout the 20-21 school year. That distance learning program is located [here](#). If you wish to opt out to distance learning, please contact your student’s ZED program/school supervisor. Their contact information is below:

ZED ALC	Amy Stites	507-775-2083	astites@zumbroed.org
ZED South Campus	Duane Ellingworth	507-775-2108	dellingworth@zumbroed.org
Transition 2 Success	Pat Ames	507-775-2037	pames@zumbroed.org

How and when can Zumbro Education District change learning models?

ZED will work with the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Education and Olmsted County Public Health (as applicable) to monitor the number of COVID-19 cases in an area or facility and ZED’s ability to follow best practice health requirements to keep students/staff safe. Adjustments to the learning models could be made as needed (going from hybrid to distance learning, in-person to hybrid, etc.) throughout the year depending on COVID-19’s impact to the school community. ZED would utilize its normal communication channels with its families to alert of such changes. Additionally learning models within ZED programs could be different as well depending on the facility.

What are the health requirements for schools?

All facilities opening to students/staff are required to have a COVID-19 preparedness plan and have protocols that address the following:

- Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet between people
- Maintain face cover requirements
- Cleaning of high-touch surfaces throughout the day
- Limiting nonessential visitors, volunteers, or external groups
- Incorporating hygiene education and routines
- Discontinue large gatherings or activities that do not allow for social distancing

- Monitor the health of students/staff and send home immediately those with COVID symptoms
- Requiring personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff who provide direct support services

What are some of the safety protocols that ZED plans to have in their schools?

ZED will have a full plan out as part of the Return to School document in the coming days. ZED has used various funding streams to purchase (and continue to purchase) safety gear in anticipating of the 2020-21 school year which include masks, gloves, infrared thermometers, cots, CDC approved cleaning supplies, face shields, plexiglass dividers, scrubs, goggles, and gowns to name a few. ZED will:

- provide 2-3 facemasks for every ZED student/staff
- require contactless temperature checks for all students entering the school and at lunch
- limit student transition within buildings and regulate 6 feet social distancing at all times
- institute detailed cleaning protocols on high contact surfaces
- exclude staff/students who exhibit any COVID symptoms from the building
- implement safety protocols to COVID responses and communication systems
- all staff trained by district nurses on various COVID strategies and educate students on best practices

What if I don't want my student(s) to wear a mask while they are in school?

Per Governor Walz's [Executive Order 20-81](#), all students grades k-12 must wear a face covering while they are in school buildings making exceptions for children under the age of 5 years old and those with a medical condition or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain a face covering. In those cases, ZED would encourage the students to wear a face shield or possibly discuss a distance learning avenue should a face covering not be worn.

Does a school or classroom have to shut down if a student or staff member has symptoms or tests positive?

The first step in the process of responding to a COVID-19 case in a school is to conduct contact tracing to identify close contacts of any with a confirmed case who attended school while infectious. Close contact is when someone is within 6 feet of the ill person for at least 15 minutes. All close contacts of a confirmed case will be notified of their exposure and asked to stay at home for 14 days since their last exposure to the confirmed case. Olmsted County Public Health would be leading the contact tracing for ZED. The decision to close a classroom, school, or district is made on a case-by-case basis based on a variety of factors. In these situations, ZED would work closely with Olmsted County Public Health and the Minnesota Department of Health to evaluate/determine next steps. ZED would work closely with all these health officials on how best to communicate with our local school communities depending on the situation.