



# Hastings Public Schools

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 200  
1000 11<sup>TH</sup> STREET WEST  
HASTINGS, MN 55033-2597  
Phone (651) 480-7000  
Fax (651) 480-7004

BRIDGE TO SUCCESS

---

Dr. Robert McDowell  
SUPERINTENDENT

Hello Raider Families,

When we began this school year, we made a commitment to continue in our hybrid learning model as long as possible. We've been diligent to watch the data and have consistently shared COVID-19 factors that could create a need for us to shift learning models.

Both Dakota County and the Hastings community, like much of the state, are seeing rapidly changing, exponential increases in COVID-19 cases. We have met with our Regional Support Team, and with our extended Incident Command Team to review the latest data related to COVID-19 in our community and schools. Our groups have reached consensus that it is time for a shift to a more restrictive learning model.

### After reviewing the data we have made the following decisions:

- Secondary students in grade 5-12 will shift to Distance Learning (DL) Wednesday, November 18. (The last day of hybrid instruction will be November 13.)
- Elementary students (K-4), will shift to Distance Learning Monday, November 30th. (The last day of hybrid instruction will be November 20.)
- These moves will last through at least December 22nd.
- In all scenarios, Emergency Childcare will continue.
- Given any unexpected increases in COVID rates or staff shortages, the timeline could be accelerated.

### Transition Days

- **For the Secondary November 18th DL start**
  - November 16 and 17: Non-school days for secondary Hybrid students (Hastings Online Academy will continue without disruption). Per the Minnesota Department of Education guidelines, the district is encouraged to provide teacher transition days.
  - November 25 continues to be a professional development day for teachers.
- **For the Elementary November 30th DL start**
  - November 23: No school for all elementary students- professional development day (shifted from November 25).
  - November 24 and 25: Non-school days for all elementary students. Per the Minnesota Department of Education guidelines, the district is encouraged to provide teacher transition days.

### This decision was made for the following reasons:

- The state recommends a more restrictive learning model when the positivity rate hits 30 per 10,000 in the county. Our rate is 33.4 and projected to be between the high 40s and low 50s next week, with continued increases the week after that.
  - We continue to see increases in positive COVID-19 cases in our Hastings community and projections show continued high numbers; new cases of COVID-19 in Hastings have almost doubled in the last week.
  - Positive cases jumped two weeks after MEA break, and health officials are expecting another increase after Thanksgiving break.
  - Significant spread is considered when the rate of positive cases reaches 5%; we are at 8.1%.
  - The number of school staff COVID-related absences have doubled in the past week. And, the number of students out due to COVID related situations or symptoms continues to rise.
-

- 
- We remain committed to being prudent in making a shift in our learning model. Delaying the elementary transition allows for continued monitoring of the data and gives families time to prepare for the change for their children.

### **What this means for Families**

- The Hastings Learning Model will shift to Distance Learning (DL) in the timelines described above; Secondary Hastings Online Academy students will continue with no interruption.
- Students who require center-based special education services will move to DL according to the student's Contingency Learning Plan. Special Education staff will evaluate COVID data after two weeks, and assess when it would be safe for students and staff to return for in-person learning opportunities.
- English Learners, students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care and students who are struggling academically will be evaluated to determine the best ways to meet their specific needs through DL.
- Meals for all students will be provided through delivery to bus routes.
- Community Education activities, building permit rentals and secondary athletics will continue at this time. Changes will be made and communicated depending on circumstances.

### **Free COVID Testing**

Free drive-thru COVID-19 testing is available Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays at [Dakota Child and Family Clinic](#) and the [Northern Service Center](#).

Thank you for your continued patience, support, and understanding as we move through these complicated and unprecedented times. We will continue to review the latest data and communicate adjustments and changes as they arise.

Be well,

Dr. Bob McDowell, Superintendent

