



School District of the City of Iron Mountain

Jerome J. Sardina
Superintendent

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July 11, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

First, let me thank you for your support and understanding as we, as a nation and community, respond to the unexpected invasion of COVID-19. I am very proud of the way our IMPS students, parents, employees, and local community leaders are handling the demands we were faced with to protect everyone as we continue to try to find the best ways to educate our students during the most unusual of circumstances. I know there continues to be concerns and questions related to how school will reopen August 26, 2020. While we are in the business of educating, our first priority is the safety of our students and our employees. Be assured, we have been working diligently on our Safe Return to School Plan. Due to all the factors and information needed to plan as COVID-19 issues unfold, the comprehensive Restart Plan will be released on or before August 17, 2020. Our desire is to return to school as normal (traditional) with enhanced safety and cleaning procedures. However, we must be proactive and be prepared during these ever-changing times to continue educating our students if and when circumstances change, as predicted, throughout the year related to the health and safety of our students and employees.

We are gathering input from parents, employees, community stakeholders, administrators, state leaders, the Michigan Department of Education, and state and local health agencies via surveys, zoom meeting updates, and a task force I have put together. If you have not taken the parent survey on our district website, I encourage you to fill it out to help us get a better understanding from our parents. The survey should only take 2-3 minutes.

Likewise, I want this letter to serve as a quick update on our initial thoughts as we begin preparing our Return to School Plan, so parents have some more details by which they can make more informed decisions about their children's education. Just as a reminder, as of the time of this writing our district is in MI Safe Start Phase 5. This means schools can open for in-person instruction with moderate safety protocols. Please keep in mind our status, or Phase 5 label, could change in the coming weeks depending on what we are faced with as the Coronavirus pandemic continues. We will also have other educational delivery options available for parents should you choose not to send your child to school. Currently, our plan is to follow as closely as we can to the Phase 5 protocols as outlined in the Roadmap. Some of those protocols include:

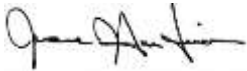
- Highly recommending students and employees to wear face masks/face shields
- Screenings for employees and students
- Requiring face masks/face shields in certain areas where we have an employee/student medical request to do so to keep those at high risk of exposure as safe as we can
- Hands-free hand sanitizing stations readily available in all parts of the buildings for visitors, students, employees.
- Each class period at the higher levels where students switch classrooms will have hourly desk cleaning procedures.
- Lower levels will see procedures keeping students in classrooms as opposed to frequently moving between rooms.
- Increased cleaning/sanitizing procedures throughout the day, every few hours to disinfect the most used surfaces, lockers, restrooms, doors, etc.
- We will have disposable face masks and face shields available for anyone who requests one. We will also be supplying every student and employee with their own washable mask that will be in school colors with the IM logo.
- Restricted building usage by visitors, entry by appointment or emergencies only
- Redefined pick up and drop off procedures to limit visitors in the buildings
- Redefined cafeteria procedures

- Reorganizing classrooms to create more room between students
- Heightened cleaning procedures for bussing, play grounds, gymnasiums, locker rooms etc.

There are a host of other areas to address, but I simply wanted to give parents an idea of what is being considered at this point and some guidance as to what can be expected. Iron Mountain staff along with community and parent support will be working very hard in the coming days and weeks to develop a plan that considers the educational, emotional, and physical needs of all of our students. We believe the recommendations we will be putting forth and the protocols we follow will represent what is best for our students, what will allow us to get back to educating your children, and are protocols that can be reasonably implemented by the schools.

**As we move forward, we are also taking into consideration that we have medically compromised students. Parents of students with a higher risk of severe illness can contact their school administration, if needed, before the Safe Start Plan is released. School administrators will finalize plans with parents regarding their academic needs for the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,



Jerry Sardina
Superintendent