

**Independent School District 592**  
**PO Box 67**  
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**Climax, Minnesota 56523-2325**

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August 19, 2020

Good morning Climax-Shelly Families,

As promised, I am writing to inform you that the district has made a decision regarding the opening of school for the 2020-2021 school year. Climax-Shelly School will begin the year in Level 2 under the Minnesota Safe Learning Plan guidance. This plan has students and staff reporting to school on September 8 in a face-to-face full-time model in grades Pre-K through 6. In our secondary, students will return to school in a hybrid model which includes both face-to-face and distance learning.

Our staff has been working to develop our reopening plans under the direction of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Our planning has been guided by the following:

- The health and safety of students and staff
- High quality, effective teaching, and learning
- Providing support for our students' social-emotional needs

After the announcement on July 29, 2020 by Governor Tim Walz, the [Emergency Executive Order 20-82 Authorizing and Directing the Commissioner of Education to Require School Districts and Charter](#) directed all public school districts in Minnesota to work collaboratively with our local county health officials to determine how to provide instruction for the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, MDE and MDH shared the [Safe Learning Plan](#) with all schools. The plan provides guidance and a framework for schools based on public health data and the number of coronavirus cases in each county. One of the primary factors used to determine the instructional model for the school year is by regularly monitoring the number of COVID cases in Polk County per 10,000 people. MDH advises schools to consider county COVID-19 case rates for the most recent two weeks when selecting in-person, virtual (online), or hybrid instruction. School administration will be continuously monitoring the latest numbers as they become available.

Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan plan has five levels and prioritizes in-person learning for our youngest learners.

**Learning Model Parameters**

Number of cases per 10,000 over 14 days, by county of residence	Learning Model
0-9	In-person learning for all students

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10-19	In-person learning for elementary students; hybrid learning for secondary students
20-29	Hybrid learning for all students
30-49	Hybrid learning for elementary students; distance learning for secondary students
50+	Distance learning for all students

As of August 13, 2020, Polk County was at 12.66 cases per 10,000 putting Climax-Shelly in the second learning model. This places grades PreK-6 students in a face-to-face, in-person learning model. Our secondary students in grades 7-12 will begin the year in a hybrid model. The School Board approved this plan at their meeting Monday night (August 17, 2020), so the following is the plan for this fall:

In our elementary, Climax-Shelly School students will return to in-person learning this fall full-time, five days per week. The in-person model means the following:

- Mandated mask policy
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Building routines to teach hygiene and safe practices to students and staff
- Daily and frequent cleaning of high touch surface areas throughout the day
- Limiting non-essential visitors and volunteers
- No large group educational programming that does not allow for social distancing
- Monitoring for illness
- Social distancing

Our 7-12 students will return in a hybrid model for the start of the school year. The hybrid model means we can bring a smaller number of students back to the school building on any given day. We are in the process of finalizing our schedule and will release it as part of our Back-to-School packet, which is scheduled to be mailed on Friday, August 21. Our tentative plan includes students being divided into two groups and attending school on alternate days, with Wednesday being designated as a day for teachers to engage with students in a one-on-one virtual manner. This engagement may include individual/small group homework completion sessions and one-to-one meetings with classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. Group A will attend school on Mondays and Tuesdays, while Group B will attend on Thursdays and Fridays. All students will attend virtually (online) on the days that they are not physically in the building. Groups will be assigned by considering several factors including transportation routes, and family dynamics, such as multiple students per family. Attendance will be

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taken every class period and will be factored into each secondary students' grade. Our staff understands that in our initial Distance Learning model, the lack of student engagement was an area where we could improve. Climax-Shelly teachers and support staff are committed to keeping students engaged in learning every day; whether they are in the building face-to-face, or through online instruction.

As stated in the Governor's Executive Order, families have the option to choose virtual learning instead of the options listed above. Information on that option will also be included in your Back-to-School packets in the form of an "Opt-In" document that will need to be returned to school. Please note that one application is required per student. A self-addressed stamped envelope will be provided for your convenience. Please return your "Opt-In" documents ASAP, as those forms will be essential in determining transportation routes for our students.

Climax-Shelly is also requesting that parents provide transportation for their students whenever possible.

As we move through the school year, we will continue to base our school planning on current COVID-19 cases, while paying close attention to possible upward or downward trends. Although we recognize the need for consistency perhaps now more than ever, we are also challenged to be proactive in our decisions to ensure the safety of our students, staff, and communities. Administration will be working closely with MDE, MDH and Polk County Public Health to monitor cases and change instructional models if county infection rates change.

Finally, the decisions and challenges that our school is faced with regarding planning and facilitating instructional models are unparalleled in our lifetimes. Please understand that every decision that is made first takes into consideration the physical and emotional safety and well-being of your child. Be assured that we will continue to improve our plan by working in a cooperative, collegial manner with our families to provide the highest quality education possible to our students. Thank you for your patience and support!

Sincerely,

Michael Underwood