

Editorial Page

Superintendent's Desk

Staying in school involves everyone...including YOU!

The Bellevue Community School District has been continuously working and preparing to allow students to attend school in a face-to-face setting for several months, with nearly three months of school completed at this time.

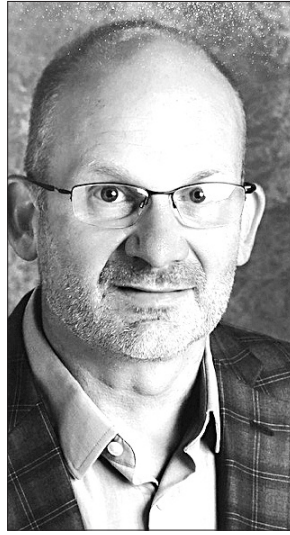
The district has been successful in allowing students to learn, interact with others, and to have as normal of a school year as possible. The social distancing in learning areas, requiring students to wear masks at appropriate times, and extra cleaning methods have allowed us to work successfully in the mitigation of COVID-19 in the school setting. While it is not perfect, we believe we have succeeded in many ways. Yet, the district is also aware of the importance of the following issues and areas of potential and immediate concern impacting the rest of the school year:

Staffing - Many districts in our area are having staffing issues due to substantial numbers of staff members testing positive for COVID-19, or being forced to quarantine as a result of being a close-contact (within 6-feet for 15 or more continuous minutes as defined by the Iowa Department of Public Health) with someone outside of school who has tested positive. The Bellevue CSD is also struggling with this issue, but have been able to successfully provide coverage for staff who are absent through substitutes and as a result of the extra staffing that we employed as we started the school year. Building principals have been creative with their staffing arrangements, and to this point, this has allowed our district to continue meeting on a daily basis.

Students - Students testing positive and being forced to quarantine has also been a major area of impact for districts across the state, along with its impact on our staff, students, and parents. A large majority of current students in quarantine in our district are a result of being a close-contact with someone outside of school who has tested positive. Bellevue Elementary has 58 students at home at this time for safety measures, although they are not ill. Bellevue MS/HS has 27 students at home for the same reason.

While we do have some students testing positive, these numbers are limited overall. Current active cases for Bellevue Elementary students is one, with four active cases at the Bellevue MS/HS. The total numbers of positive cases for the school year are 13 students at Bellevue Elementary, and 17 students at Bellevue MS/HS.

Plan for the Future - At this time, the Bellevue Community School District is planning to continue with a face-to-face learning environment. The district believes the best environment for students at this time for academic learning and success, social and emotional well-being, and for the benefit of students overall is to remain in this environment. The district also recognizes that if staffing issues cannot be dealt with effectively due to staff illness and quarantine, or student absences due to illness increase with COVID-19, then we may need to re-evaluate and re-examine our learning schedule in some manner.



By TOM MEYER
Superintendent
Bellevue School District

Your Role - In order for us to stay in school in our current environment, it is imperative that our students, staff, and all community members assist us in the mitigation of COVID-19. Some keys in this process are wearing masks and social distancing not only in school, but also outside of school. While our students wear masks in school, we also need them to wear masks and social distance outside of school. Additionally, parents and other community members need to assist us in their actions in the community by wearing masks, social distancing, and avoiding social gatherings.

At the end of this letter is a "Summary of Enhanced Public Health Measures" from Governor Reynolds that was presented on November 10. While there are school and youth-specific information included in this information, there is also other information in regard to general social interactions and community establishments. I encourage you to review this and assist in the directives from the state level. Some basic school information for activities includes only having two spectators permitted for each athlete at events (participants will be given "tickets" to share with their family to utilize), and more information will be coming out in the near future about Bellevue CSD extracurricular activities (athletics, fine arts concerts, etc.).

If you have any questions, please contact the school at any time. We value our community, and especially our students. We want to provide the best educational programs possible for each and every student, and we all must assist in making this possible.

Summary of Enhanced Public Health Measures

Effective Wednesday, Nov. 11 at 12:01 a.m. until Monday, Nov. 30 at 11:59 p.m.

Gathering Restrictions: Social, community, recreational, or leisure

- If more than 10 people:
 - 6 feet distancing between groups
 - Groups limited to 8 people, with the exception of households larger than 8
 - Take other reasonable measures to ensure social distancing, increase hygiene, etc.
- If more than 25 people and indoors, all participants over 2 years old must wear masks except when eating and drinking.
- If more than 100 people and outdoors, all participants over 2 years old must wear masks except when eating and drinking.
- All these restrictions apply to wedding receptions, including distancing, group limitations, and mask requirement if event is sufficiently large

Youth and High School Sports:

- If more than 25 people and indoors, all spectators over 2 years old must wear masks and maintain 6 feet distance from other spectators
- Only two spectators permitted for each youth athlete
- Athletes of any age can be closer than six feet and are not required to wear masks

Restaurants and Bars: Restaurant or bar, including a wedding reception venue, winery, brewery, distillery, country club, or other social or fraternal club

- Six feet distancing between groups
- Groups limited to 8 people unless larger group is all same household
- Seated when eating or drinking and limit congregating

Personal Service Establishments: Salons, barbershops, massage therapy establishments, tattoo establishments, and tanning facilities

- Ensure that all customers are six feet apart when performing services
- Mandated to wear masks, except when performing face services

Closer/Prolonged Contact Establishments: Bowling alleys, pool halls, bingo halls, arcades, indoor playgrounds, children's play centers

- Ensure that groups and individuals are six feet apart at establishment
- Groups limited to eight people unless larger group is all same household

Remote Working/Other Employer Measures: All employers shall evaluate whether any more of their employees can feasibly work remotely and to the extent reasonable, shall take steps to enable such employees to work from home. Those remaining open shall take other reasonable precautions.

**WEAR A MASK
SAVE A LIFE**

Together we can help slow the spread of COVID-19

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