

Chippewa Hills

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School District

Dr. Grover, Superintendent
Mr. Martin, Finance Director
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October 28, 2020

Dear Warrior Families:

I have been in a great deal of communication with District Health Department 10 over the past few days as things have either come to our attention or fruition over the last 48 hours. Yesterday I shared what was known at that time, but things have grown more since and I am obligated to respond in a manner that protects our students, staff and families. I will elaborate on why this decision is being made below, but I am closing the Barryton Elementary building from in-person instruction until November 12, 2020. Virtual instruction will continue throughout this time period with staff providing lessons and communicating with families to encourage continued academic growth. Please take care of your families health and safety needs while making learning an important component of daily expectations during this transition.

Why am I making this decision now? Again, without sharing too much detail that impedes on anyone's confidentiality, I will put it out in this manner. We have at least one positive staff member with 4 other staff quarantined (not all from the same event) and 3 others being tested right now. We have one student testing positive that has connections to one of the staff being tested and has more connections through siblings in other classes. This has the potential to be an outbreak quickly and we do not want to put our students, staff or families at risk for that type of an event. After going over all the possible scenarios and connections with DHD 10, they support our move to close the building for 2 weeks looking at a fresh start on November 12, 2020. This time period should allow students and staff time to recoup if needed, or be away from potential risks if not currently exposed. We want our Warrior families to remain safe.

Our other schools will currently remain open at this time as there have not been direct connections made to others as of yet. However, if you are a Barryton family and have children who attend other schools, please follow the information sheet with the flowchart about sending your child to school. Do not send your child to school if they have any symptoms of Covid-19 as provided on the sheet we handed out. This is true for all

students in all communities. We do not want to put anyone at risk if we can keep from it. We are all in this together and it will take a community effort to contain it.

I realize this type of event can make some people extremely nervous about sending their children to school, no matter what building. I want to assure you that we will continue to follow safety protocols in our buildings in an effort to maintain safe facilities for their learning. You may choose to go virtual until our local numbers subside as Mecosta and Isabella have been growing rapidly lately, but we will still expect your child to be involved in the learning process. Please make academics a part of the daily expectations with checks in place to assure that is occurring. If you need assistance with connectivity or technology, please call us for help. If your child needs more support, then work with the teacher and/or paraprofessional to facilitate that guidance. Virtual is not a vacation, it may actually be harder and require more effort to maintain the standard we expect of our students. We know in-person is the best practice, but safety is the priority right now so we have to do the best we can under the circumstances. That is all we ask, give your best effort and work with us to help your child be successful.

I am sorry this is happening to, and in, our schools. I apologize for the inconveniences it may cause families as we have to close our doors. I regret that we have to rely on less than desirable instructional approaches to accommodate our students when this type of event strikes. However, I am comfortable in making this decision for the safety of our students, staff and families despite these apologies. I hope you will continue to support our school as we grow and learn through these tragedies and as we continue to yearn for that normalcy we once took for granted. It may be different and we may have to adapt, but Chippewa Hills remains a great place to learn, work and live...thanks to all of you.

Bob Grover