



July 31, 2020

Prairie Families:

First and foremost, thank you for understanding the complexity of school reopening during the current COVID-19 crisis. Second, thank you for your persistence in fully reading the information we are sending. This is an incredibly complex situation and there is no way to accommodate the need for detail while still being brief.

COVID-19 represents perhaps the biggest challenge that schools, Iowa, and the nation have faced in decades. While we attempt to mitigate the impacts of our decisions on families to the greatest extent possible, there are unavoidable sacrifices that our district stakeholders will be required to make in the coming months.

I am sending this communication today to inform you of our learning model for the school year. While our announcement date was scheduled to be August 7th, we wanted to get this information to you as soon as possible. We based our decision on feedback from two surveys distributed to our community and questions we received from families who have reached out to our district team and the CCSD School Board. It is important to stress that we will work to provide multiple additional details about our plan.

Just in the last two weeks, Governor Kim Reynolds, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Iowa Department of Public Health have introduced new regulations that were not established when we started our planning process several weeks ago. This narrowed many viable options that now do not satisfy the newly required 50% on-site requirement. Additionally, we are working through guidance released just yesterday about health and safety in returning to school.

This will be the first of many communications with details related to reopening in the fall. At the time of this communication, we are just over three weeks away from the first day of the school year, August 24. Three weeks is like an eternity in this crisis, but we have made and will continue to make decisions that meet as many of our families' needs as possible. As guidance and state requirements continue to change, details will continue to unfold until the start of school. We will continue to focus on accurate and relevant communication that is worth your time to read. Additionally, we will only communicate plans that we know we can stand behind. Our hope is to continue to expand opportunities within all of our plans throughout the fall.

Based on our criteria for decision-making (page 2 of the Return to Learn Plan), close examination of our district needs, staff and family input, and state requirements, we have chosen to begin the year in **Hybrid Learning with the intent to transition to full time onsite instruction as soon as possible**. While we know Hybrid Learning poses challenges for families, our survey data indicated support for Hybrid Learning as a short-term, transitional model. We will try to work with families to reduce these challenges to the greatest extent possible.

The intent of Hybrid Learning is to offer a careful approach to starting school. Online Learning was listed as the most challenging for families, especially those without the means or ability to provide childcare during the day or to work from home. At some point this fall, Online Learning may be necessary, but we believe Hybrid Learning strikes a balance of safety and the need to have students attend school.

When we begin school on August 24th, the majority of our students will not have stepped foot in a school, on a bus or on school property for 161 days (which is over 5 months). In that time, our community and families have experienced a variety of hardships. These hardships include finding childcare, job loss, difficulty with learning during the school closure, family illness/loss, the loss of vital support structures, and changes to a host of other services families rely on to support their children and enrich their lives. While this virus has impacted all of us, that impact varies greatly among different segments of our school community.

One piece of very consistent research among the mountains of research on COVID-19 is that children need to be in school for their continued healthy development. Therefore, our focus has been and will continue to be making it safe for children to return to school, while providing choices like the Temporary Virtual Learning Option to parents whose children have medical needs or who have the desire, means, and ability to support their child's learning at home.

The decision to start in Hybrid Learning has four intended outcomes:

- 1) Allow a "soft start" to the school year in which both students and staff consistently follow safety procedures.
- 2) Allow for adjusting to new safety procedures and routines with manageable numbers of students onsite at one time. This includes routines for sanitization and balancing class sizes to ensure maximum physical distancing.
- 3) Provide onsite instruction during the week to help reduce the challenges that families encountered during the previous school closure.
- 4) Allow district and public health officials time to analyze how the reopening of schools impacts the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Our decision to begin in Hybrid Learning will prompt additional questions from our community. While we are working on responding to these questions, it is important to announce our intentions today to allow parents to begin planning. Next week, we will release final revisions to the Return to Learn Plan, as well as a robust set of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers gathered from the family survey.

There are several key questions that we are able to answer at this time:

**Q: The Hybrid #1 model (page 11 of the Return to Learn Plan) seems to provide more physical distancing for secondary and time for families to connect with school personnel. Why was this model not chosen?**

A: While this was our preferred model for Hybrid Learning, we are unable to use this model because it does not meet the 50% onsite (over two weeks) requirement. Additionally, requirements released by the Iowa Department of Public Health and Iowa Department of Education state that this model would not be approved because the positive test percentage for our community is not high enough to seek any arrangement where students are onsite less than 50% of the time over the course of two weeks.

**Q: How long will we be in Hybrid Learning?**

A: The entire school district will be in Hybrid Learning during the following weeks:

August 24 - August 28

August 31 - September 4

September 8 - September 11

**Q: What will the first three weeks of school look like in Hybrid Learning?**

A: We will be using Hybrid Model #3 (page 12 of the Return to Learn Plan)

WEEK 1	MONDAY August 24	TUESDAY August 25	WEDNESDAY August 26	THURSDAY August 27	FRIDAY August 28
	Cohort A	Cohort A	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort B

WEEK 2	MONDAY August 31	TUESDAY September 1	WEDNESDAY September 2	THURSDAY September 3	FRIDAY September 4
	Cohort A	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort B	Cohort B

WEEK 3	MONDAY September 7	TUESDAY September 8	WEDNESDAY September 9	THURSDAY September 10	FRIDAY September 11
	LABOR DAY NO CLASSES	Cohort A	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort B

**Q: What will the district transition to after Hybrid Learning?**

A: Due to differences among the size of our buildings, programming for students, and enrollment, the intended transition is as follows:

1. Elementary PK-6 - Return to Onsite Learning Model on September 14
2. Secondary 7-12 - Maintain Hybrid Model until at least October 5

**Q: Based on the success of Hybrid Learning, the spread of COVID-19 on campus, and community health conditions between August 24 and September 14, would the decision to transition to a different model other than Onsite Learning for elementary (PK-6) and the Hybrid Learning for secondary (7-12) be reconsidered? If so, when would the District intend to inform parents?**

A: Yes. If there is a need to change our plan, we will do our best to inform parents in a timely manner. We have chosen the first three weeks for Hybrid Learning to allow at least a one-week notification of any planned changes.

- Elementary PK-6 - We will communicate a final decision regarding our plan for September 14th between September 2 and September 4.
- Secondary 7-12 - We will communicate a final decision regarding our plan for October 5 between September 23 and September 25.

**Q: How and when will cohorts (or groups) for Hybrid Learning be announced?**

A: Your child's school will inform you of your cohort group (A or B) as soon as possible. We are targeting the week of August 1-7 to provide this information.

**Q: If I have multiple students in the school district, will they be in the same cohort?**

A: We will do our very best to keep families and households together. This is our first consideration in our development of cohorts.

**Q: If I do not like my cohort, can I change?**

A: Cohorts will be established to keep families together and to be the same size. Any changes will affect other structures within and across schools. Changes will be very rare and will only be to prevent a significant family hardship.

Families will certainly have additional questions related to this plan. As stated above, we intend to release a final version of the plan and a full list of FAQs early next week. Please know that we are putting all of our effort behind this process and this plan represents a rebuilding of almost every aspect of school operations for the fall.

Every year, we discuss the vital partnership between families and schools in supporting the education of children. This year, we need our families more than ever; your support, your flexibility and your patience. We have seen and felt the negative impact school closures have on the great majority of our families. As we work to provide safe environments while students are at school throughout the fall, I ask that our families continue to help us beyond the school day. This will be vital in avoiding school closures in the coming months. This assistance includes physical distancing, wearing face coverings when physical distancing is not possible or in public spaces, monitoring your exposure, and keeping children home when ill. In other words, please help us decrease the spread of COVID-19 in our community not only for public health, but to allow us to return all children to school onsite as soon as possible.

In closing, I would like to thank those of you who have reached out in person, electronically, through social media and in the survey with notes of encouragement for our school team. Your understanding of our difficult position as educators and leaders in this situation means more than words can express. Additionally, thank you for supporting our teachers and other staff as they express concerns for personal safety in returning to onsite instruction. Everyone at College Community is doing their very best in these difficult circumstances and we appreciate your trust.

In Service,

Doug Wheeler, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

## 2020 / 2021 School Start and End Times

Elementary Schools		Prairie Crest	Prairie Heights	Prairie Hill	Prairie Ridge	Prairie View			
School Start Times		9:15	9:15	9:15	9:15	9:15			
Earliest Parents May Drop Off Students		8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50			
Breakfast Starts		8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50			
Dismissal		4:00	3:50	3:50	K-1 3:55 2-4 3:58	4:00			
Alternative Kindergarten (AK) Hill Only									
Morning (AM)									
School Start Times		---	---	9:15	---	---			
Earliest Parents May Drop Off Students		---	---	8:50	---	---			
Breakfast Starts		---	---	8:50	---	---			
Afternoon (PM)									
Start Times		---	---	1:05	---	---			
Earliest Parents May Drop Off Students		---	---	1:00	---	---			
End Time		---	---	3:50	---	---			
Intermediate (5-6)				Prairie Creek					
School Start Time				7:50					
Earliest Parents May Drop Off Students				7:30					
School Dismissal				6 <sup>th</sup> – 2:43 5 <sup>th</sup> – 2:46					
Middle School and 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Academy (7-9)				Prairie Point					
School Start Time				7:50					
Earliest Parents May Drop Off Students				7:35					
School Dismissal				2:36					
High School (10-12)				Prairie High School					
School Start Time				9:15					
School Dismissal				4:00					
Prairie Alternative High School				Kirkwood Campus					
School Start Time				9:15					
School Dismissal				3:15					
Prairie Edge Program		Grades K-4		Grades 5-6		Grades 7-9		Grades 10-11	
School Start Times		7:55		7:55		7:55		7:55	
School Dismissal		2:30		2:30		2:30		2:30	
Prairie Hawks Preschool Program		Prairie Crest	Prairie Heights	Prairie Hill	Prairie Ridge	Prairie View	ECC	Shared Vision Room ECC Only	
AM only (M – Thurs)								M-Thurs	
Start times		8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50	8:50	9:00	
Earliest drop off		8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:55	
Dismissal		11:40	11:40	11:40	11:40	11:40	11:40	---	
PM only (M – Thurs)									
Start times		12:50	12:50	12:50	12:50	12:50	12:50	---	
Earliest drop off		12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45	---	
Dismissal		3:40	3:40	3:40	3:40	3:40	3:40	3:00	