

## Maquoketa Valley Return to Learn Information for Parents

Dear Maquoketa Valley Parents,

We want to let you know our current plan when returning to school in the fall. We have been receiving guidance from Delaware County Health, Keystone AEA, and the Iowa Department of Education (DE). Each of these organizations continues to update their guidance each week so there may be changes to this plan as we get closer to the start of school. The DE indicated last week that they will be sending important guidance regarding safety protocols for schools in early August. I feel we need to receive this guidance and have a chance to understand the best way to implement the safety protocols before students and staff return to school.

Our goal is to create the safest possible environment for our students and staff. We need to have the recommendation from the state and properly implement the suggestions. As a result, I recommended to the school board and they voted to move the **start date for the school year to August 24th for students**. This is not a decision we took lightly but believe it allows us to create the safest school environment possible. See the new 2020-2021 school calendar attached to this email.

We want to be able to keep our schools open, have students participate in extracurricular activities and keep everyone healthy. Based on recommendation from health experts, it is important for our entire community to practice these 5 areas:

1. Physically distance ourselves as much as possible
2. Wear masks when we cannot be physically distant
3. Wash hands often
4. Sanitize our school facilities carefully
5. Staff and students must stay home if they are ill

We believe the best way to educate our students is to have them in school so the plan at this time is to have all students return to school on August 24th. We will try to avoid having students in large groups for lengthy periods of time as much as possible. When students must be in larger groups, they must wear masks. When students are able to physically distance themselves, which means they are more than 6 feet apart, they will be allowed to remove their masks.

When students are on the bus they must wear a mask unless they have a health condition that would not allow this. It would be helpful if parents can bring their students to and from school, if possible, to reduce the number of students on the bus.

We will be taking additional steps to prevent large groups of students from gathering in one place. When students arrive at school, we will have them move to their classrooms as soon as possible in an effort to reduce the number of students in the common areas. We will spread students out during lunch so they are not all in one place. Middle school and high school students will move to an A/B block schedule which means they will have 4 classes on one day

and the other 4 classes the next day. Each class will be approximately 90 minutes. This will reduce the number of times students are passing in the hallways and also reduces the number of students in classrooms each day.

This school year will provide us some unique challenges but we will continue to communicate with you as more information becomes available. We will send more specific guidance after we receive the recommendation from the state in early August. Our focus is on creating a healthy, educational environment for all staff and students. If you have not yet completed the survey we sent last week, we would appreciate you completing it this week. This information is very important to us as we continue to plan. The survey link is:

[Survey Link](#)

Sincerely,

Dave Hoeger  
Superintendent