

August 4, 2020

Dear Orono families,

Last week, Orono Schools was delighted to share back-to-school options that have been reviewed by the health department. We are offering students and families two options for the 2020-21 school year: hybrid learning or full-time distance learning. As you are contemplating your decision, additional information is available in the "[back to school options](#)" document. The following paragraphs provide brief descriptions of the hybrid and distance learning models.

Option 1: Hybrid Learning

The first option is hybrid learning. The elementary/intermediate hybrid model brings K-5 students to school every day taught by a teacher in smaller groups and video-connected classrooms. The hybrid model for secondary students blends onsite learning every-other-day and home-based distance learning on alternate days.

Option 2: Distance Learning

The second option is an enhanced distance learning model for families who would prefer their child not attend school onsite. The improved distance learning option is designed to maintain live connections between students and teachers while providing flexibility for students and families.

Elementary distance learning. Elementary students who choose distance learning will work with a grade-level distance learning teacher who will teach core subjects and team with other grade level teachers. Distance learning students will join live Language Arts and Mathematics instruction at a specified time between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., with teachers creating learning activities, assess, and provide feedback to students through Seesaw and Schoology.

Secondary distance learning. Secondary students who choose distance learning will maintain the same class schedule as students in the hybrid model. The secondary distance learning model will combine the structure of a school schedule, live interaction with teachers and peers, and flexibility to access online class resources as needed. Online resources will include video recordings of teacher lessons, digital textbook resources, supplemental online resources, and interactive activities.

Please submit your preference by August 10. Each student will have the option of a hybrid or distance learning option for the 2020-21 school year. In order for us to plan schedules and assign staffing we need you to [complete the enrollment form](#) for each of your children by Monday, August 10. Because of the challenges of staffing both models, we would appreciate that you commit to this choice for at least the first half of the school year. We recognize that health considerations may necessitate more students in a distance learning model as the school year progresses. We will be able to accommodate students who shift from hybrid to distance learning, but will have limited capacity to allow students who choose distance learning to shift back to the hybrid model.

We appreciate your time and partnership in making this school year the best it can be. Building principals will also send more detailed building plans in the coming days. Thank you in advance for completing the enrollment form and for your continued trust in us.