Dear Parents and Staff,

Administrators, teachers and staff at Orono Schools are working diligently to balance the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students with the health and safety of the learning community. This is one of the greatest challenges our district has faced. Based on our current situation in Minnesota, Orono Schools will offer students and families two options for the 2020-2021 school year:

**Hybrid learning.** For grades K-5, we will offer families a choice of all-day, full-week, onsite learning or full-time, home-based distance learning. For grades 6-12, we will offer students a hybrid learning program (blend of in-person and distance learning) or full-time, home-based distance learning.

**Home-based, distance learning option.** We are aware of a variety of health-related concerns among our families. Some parents have requested a home-based, distance learning option and we are committed to providing options to all students. A distance-learning option is available at all grade levels. We have studied our distance leaning model and have worked on improving our model with specifically assigned distance learning teachers.

No matter which option families choose, we will need to remain flexible throughout the school year and be prepared to adjust to changing conditions to protect the health and safety of students, families, staff and the community.

Our response to these challenges will never be perfect, so we will rely on community trust, patience and grace as we return to school with multiple new learning conditions and health accommodations.

Many more details will be available as we move closer to the start of the school year. Please watch your email for updates and communications from the district as well as school principals and buildings. We have listened, we have learned, and we have prepared based on Orono community input and partnership.

With gratitude,
Karen Orcutt, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Orono Schools

### Table of Contents

- **Our Core Assumptions and Guiding Principles** ................................................................. 3
- **Learning Models** ............................................................................................................. 3
- **Equity** ............................................................................................................................ 3
- **Supporting All Learners** .................................................................................................. 3
- **Social Emotional Well-Being of Students** ................................................................. 3
- **Stakeholder Input and Engagement** ............................................................................. 3
- **Health and Safety** .......................................................................................................... 4
- **Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 Cases** ................................................................. 4
- **Technology and Access** .................................................................................................. 4
- **Resources** ....................................................................................................................... 5
- **Planning Team and Parent, Community, and Staff Input** .................................. 5
- **Orono Schumann Elementary Models** ................................................................. 6
- **Orono Intermediate School Models** ................................................................. 8
- **Orono Middle School Models** ..................................................................................... 10
- **Orono High School Models** ...................................................................................... 12
Our Core Assumptions and Guiding Principles

- Orono’s back-to-school plans will prioritize and support health, safety and well-being of students and staff. The learning community will need to remain flexible throughout the school year and prepared to adjust to changing conditions.
- Parents need choice
- Orono’s high-quality academic program is prioritized, as always, as we adjust learning models and support the needs of all learners.
- Strong relationships with teachers are critical to student engagement and well-being
- Orono Schools will work collaboratively with the governor’s office, the Minnesota Departments of Health (MDH) and Education (MDE), Hennepin County, and local leaders in the best interest of our community.
- Orono’s back-to-school plans are based on both parent and staff needs while following the parameters from public health agencies.

Learning Models

We will offer parents a choice that includes both onsite and offsite learning. The elementary hybrid model will include all-day, all-week models for our youngest students and a rotational learning schedule for secondary students. The enhanced distance learning option will include synchronous and asynchronous instruction with increased opportunity for livestreamed lessons from camera-equipped classrooms.

Equity

Our Orono learning models emphasize equal access and choice for all students. Our models will adjust and simplify daily routines for families and students who need additional support. Orono students and staff have been working on cultural competencies to meet individual student needs. This work will be a top priority and will be part of our learning plans for the 2020-21 school year.

Supporting All Learners

Ensuring equitable learning opportunities to enable all students to progress in Orono’s learning program is another top priority. Students with IEPs or 504 plans will be served through their individualized program plans. Students with cultural, English learning needs will also be served. Plans for these learning programs will be developed through our ongoing support teams.

Social Emotional Well-Being of Students

The social emotional needs of our students continue to be a high priority. We understand that many students and families have experienced challenges as a result of COVID-19. Systems for monitoring the needs of students are in place. All models we offer will attend to social emotional needs and the importance of relationships to all our students. We will focus on resilience and learning to cope through challenging times.

Stakeholder Input and Engagement

Feedback from our stakeholders has been primary in our planning. Continuous feedback processes were put in place to ensure effective communication with stakeholders. Ongoing feedback and communication between district staff, parents, and students was prioritized. Feedback was sought through our distance learning website, from parent organizations, from district advisory committees, from students, and through surveys conducted in May and June 2020. Those surveys sought feedback about distance learning, advice for continuous improvement, and preferences for future plans. Formative feedback about distance learning led to immediate improvements...
in connections between students and teachers, provision of additional support to students and families, and improvements to the teaching and learning process. Teacher feedback about distance learning was also collected, including their work with students, collaborative work with colleagues, teaching and learning practices, and future needs. Stakeholder feedback will continue to guide district planning and will be integral to continuous improvement throughout the 2020-21 school year.

Health and Safety

Orono schools must be safe places to learn. Health and safety are at the forefront of everything we do. We are committed to developing a safe process that aligns with guidance provided by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The district will take strong, intentional approaches to support the health and safety of all members of its community. These approaches include the following:

Health Screening

Health screening will be part of our return-to-school plans to help ensure the health and safety of our learning community. More details will be shared before school begins.

Social Distancing

Each building will develop specific social distancing plans for students and staff. Some examples of our social distancing include:

- Markings and signage to ensure students and employees remain apart when entering buildings and walking the hallways
- Adjustments will be made to seating and desks, to allow student distancing
- In-person class size will be reduced
- Large group settings will be eliminated
- Transportation changes will include fewer students on school buses

Personal Protective Equipment and Hygiene

The district will require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for students and employees when in school. This includes the use of face coverings for students and staff, hand sanitizer and frequent hand washing. Additional guidance will be provide regarding PPE needs for students.

Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

We will follow guidance from MDH in our response to a positive COVID-19 diagnosis. If we receive confirmation that a student or employee has had a positive diagnosis, prompt action will be taken in consultation with MDH. We will follow their directions regarding possible quarantine or isolations and communication to families.

Technology and Access

Our technology department will provide access to all students and staff through a working device. Technology staff will support Orono students and staff as they utilize learning tools and system applications.
**Resources**


“Make a Plan Minnesota” (helpful planning for families) [https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/get-help/make-a-plan.jsp](https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/get-help/make-a-plan.jsp)

“How to make face masks more comfortable for kids,” Children’s Minnesota [https://www.childrensmn.org/2020/06/05/make-face-masks-comfortable-kids/](https://www.childrensmn.org/2020/06/05/make-face-masks-comfortable-kids/)

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**Planning Team and Parent, Community, and Staff Input**

The back-to-school plan for the 2020-21 school year is based on input from the following Orono Schools employees, the Orono School Board, and survey data gathered from families in May and June 2020.

**Planning Team Members**

**Districtwide Participants:**

Karen Orcutt, Superintendent  
Scott Alger, Director of Human Resources  
Kristi Flesher, Director of Special Services  
Paul Hamilton, Curriculum and Development Leader  
John Morstad, Director of Business Services  
Aaron Ruhland, Director of Learning and Accountability  
Jane Smith, Teacher, Gifted and Talented  
Alex Townsend, Technology Coordinator

**Orono School Board Members:**

Robert Tunheim, Chair  
Sarah Borchers, Vice Chair  
Mike Bash, Treasurer  
Martha Van de Ven, Clerk  
Ali Howe, Director  
Laura Wallander, Director

**School Participants:**

Adam Lamparske, Principal, Schumann Elementary School  
Brandon Papenfuss, Teacher, Kindergarten  
Becky Schultz, Teacher, First Grade  
Mary Jodl Ernhart, Principal, Orono Intermediate School  
Lindsey Nelson, Teacher, Grade Three  
Jess Hovland, Teacher, Grade Four  
Kim Van Eyll, Associate Principal, Orono Middle School  
Kelly Hubert, Teacher, Spanish  
Sara Hunstiger, Teacher, Math  
Amy Steiner, Principal, Orono High School  
Jeff Aman, Teacher, Social Studies  
Sarah Cole, Teacher, English
ORONO SCHUMANNE ELEMENTARY
2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

BACK-TO-SCHOOL

OPTIONS IN
ORONO SCHOOLS

ORONO SCHUMANN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
765

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K-2: Back-to-School Options for 2020-21

Orono Schumann Elementary Models

Orono Schumann Elementary (OSE) has developed choice models for families during the 2020-21 school year. The design is based on providing our youngest students with the most time in school. Parents will choose one of the following models:

**Hybrid Model.** This model is a creative blend of networked classroom spaces to bring students back for a full-day, 5 days/week, on-site school experience. Utilizing all staff and video-connected, companion classrooms, students will attend school in smaller groups per Minnesota Department of Health 50% building guidelines that allow for social distancing. Each classroom will have a core teacher, who moves between classrooms for instruction, assisted by a companion teacher and team.

**Distance Learning Model.** This model is an enhanced distance learning format from home. A dedicated online teacher will provide a daily blend of live, teacher-led learning experiences, as well as more flexible indirect learning activities for families.

► **Option 1 Hybrid:** K-2 students onsite. All day. All week.

Schumann Elementary’s five-day, in-school option features:

- All space is viewed at 50% building capacity for social distancing
- **Kindergarten** students will occupy classrooms with the largest space with social distancing in place and one core teacher. Students in **grades 1-2** will attend school in smaller groups, with each classroom split between video-connected, companion spaces with opportunity for livestreamed lessons in both rooms to limit mixing of students in classrooms and hallways.
- Coordinated lessons, specials, and targeted support for all students

► **Option 2: Distance Learning**

Distance Learning features:

- Dedicated teacher (one per grade) will team and work closely with an onsite classroom teacher
- Lessons will be livestreamed with a blend of teacher-led learning experiences and direct instruction from the core classroom or companion classroom per a daily schedule
- Seesaw lessons, digital portfolios, and feedback
- Support, structure and flexibility

Details coming soon...

- Transportation
- Health checks and hygiene protocols
- Nutrition services
- Communication home in the event of illness
- Attendance and grading
- Technology
- Before- and after-school childcare
ORONO INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL
2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

BACK-TO-SCHOOL
OPTIONS IN
ORONO SCHOOLS
Grades 3-5: Back-to-School Options for 2020-21

Orono Intermediate School Models

Orono Intermediate School (IS) has developed choice models for families during the 2020-21 school year. The IS design is based on providing our youngest students with the most time in school. Parents will choose one of the following models:

**Hybrid Model.** This model is a creative blend of networked classroom spaces to bring students back for a full-day, 5 days/week, on-site school experience. Utilizing all staff and video-connected, companion classrooms, students will attend school in smaller groups per Minnesota Department of Health 50% building guidelines that allow for social distancing.

**Distance Learning Model.** This model is an enhanced distance learning format from home. A dedicated online teacher will provide a daily blend of live, teacher-led learning experiences, as well as more flexible indirect learning activities for families.

**Option 1 Hybrid: Grades 3-5 students onsite. All day. All week.**

Orono Intermediate School’s five-day, in-school option features:

- All space is viewed at 50% building capacity for social distancing
- **Students in grades 3-4** will occupy classrooms with the largest space with social distancing in place and one core teacher. **Students in grade 5** will attend school in smaller groups, with each classroom split between video-connected, companion spaces with opportunity for livestreamed lessons in both rooms to limit mixing of students in classrooms and hallways.
- Coordinated lessons, specials, and targeted support for all students

**Option 2: Distance Learning**

Distance Learning features:

- Dedicated teacher (one per grade) will team and work closely with an onsite classroom teacher
- Lessons will be livestreamed with a blend of teacher-led learning experiences and direct instruction from the core classroom or companion classroom per a daily schedule
- Seesaw lessons, digital portfolios, and feedback
- Support, structure and flexibility

Details coming soon...

- Transportation
- Health checks and hygiene protocols
- Nutrition services
- Communication home in the event of illness
- Attendance and grading
- Technology
- Before- and after-school childcare
Grades 6-8: Back-to-School Options for 2020-21

Orono Middle School Models

The Orono Middle School design is based on allowing middle-level learners both flexible and direct instruction. Parents may choose one of the following: (1) in-person hybrid model, with an every-other-day (A/B) rotation, or (2) full-time distance learning. These options provide structure and support while building independent learning skills.

► Option 1: Grades 6-8 Hybrid/Blended Model

Orono Middle School’s hybrid/blended model features:
- All space is viewed at 50% building capacity for social distancing
- Students will be assigned to an every-other-day (A/B) schedule rotation (two days onsite one week and three days the following week), combined with scheduled live or on-demand distance learning on alternating days.
- Simplified scheduling model will concentrate content and enhance communication and relationship-building between students, families, and teachers. Students will be scheduled with 4 to 5 teachers each semester, with two core classes each semester.

► Option 2: Full-time Distance Learning Program

Distance Learning features:
- Students receive instruction during regular class times via online and livestreamed pathways
- Daily connections to teachers in every subject area with steady flow of new content
- Support and structure
- Schoology lessons, digital portfolio, and feedback

Details coming soon...

- Transportation
- Health checks and hygiene protocols
- Nutrition services
- Communication home in the event of illness
- Attendance and grading
- Technology
ORONO HIGH SCHOOL
2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

BACK-TO-SCHOOL OPTIONS IN ORONO SCHOOLS

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Grades 9-12: Back-to-School Options for 2020-21

Orono High School Models

Orono High School (OHS) has developed learning models for families during the 2020-21 academic year based on family choice and college- and career-ready needs of older students. Parents may choose one of the following: (1) in-person hybrid model, with an every-other-day (A/B) rotation where students will come to school two days one week and three days the following week, or (2) full-time distance learning.

Option 1: Grades 9-12 Hybrid/Blended Model

Orono High School’s hybrid/blended model features:

- All space is viewed at 50% building capacity for social distancing
- Students will be assigned to an every-other-day (A/B) schedule rotation (two days onsite one week and three days the following week), combined with scheduled live or on-demand distance learning on alternating days.
- The days students are learning off-campus, juniors and seniors will be learning in a different type of work schedule more closely aligned with pre-college and career curriculum learning with more structural support for freshman and sophomore students.

In-person and distance learning blend

Example: A-Day students attend class on Monday

B-Day students learn from home

Sample A-Day month: Alternating days of in-person instruction

Option 2: Full-time Distance Learning Program

Distance Learning features:

- Schedule modeled on the traditional, seven-period high school day
- Students receive instruction during regular class times via livestreamed (per schedule) and online pathways, including Schoology
- Daily connections to teachers in every subject area with steady flow of new content
- Improved support and structure

Details coming soon...

- Specialized project/experience for seniors
- Transportation
- Health checks and hygiene protocols
- Nutrition services
- Communication home in the event of illness
- Attendance and grading
- Technology
**Blended Learning Model for Juniors and Seniors**

Orono High School’s (OHS) learning model will be a blended learning model. At OHS, blended learning refers to the belief that the days students are learning off-campus, juniors and seniors will be learning in a different type of work schedule more closely aligned with pre-college curriculum and learning. Students will have an increasing ability to develop their own individual learning structure. Technology and internet access give us the ability to change our traditional school structure and prepare our graduates for a future with new emerging jobs and changing careers. College, university and other post-secondary learning are based on students’ independent learning and self-designed learning skills. The OHS model of blended learning will better prepare students for college and university learning models. The model opens up the traditional five-day week so students can engage in independent learning opportunities, applied learning, and self-paced learning. Students can engage in opportunities alongside their traditional, classroom-based academic program requiring students to develop their time management skills and prepare for the college model, seeking help from faculty as needed. Development of a senior project will be underway with details forthcoming in the fall.

**Blended Learning Model for Freshman and Sophomore Students**

Orono High School’s learning model for younger high school students will be based on a design allowing students to have more direct instruction on the days they do not attend school. Support for freshman and sophomore students will include enhanced and frequent live instruction with classroom teachers for connection and learning. Students will be expected to attend live, interactive lessons through video connection from their home setting.