

Monday, October 12, 2020

To: Constituents in Stearns County and adjacent counties:

We are writing to you today to ask for your help to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

We are just over a month into the school year and are seeing an [increase in the number of positive COVID cases](#). This results in our schools needing to move to more restrictive learning models such as hybrid and/or distance learning. This is disappointing to everyone involved.

We have been given [requirements from the Minnesota Department of Health](#) that we are following in the schools, and they are working to reduce the spread of the virus. We have been working closely with local public health to understand the situation in our communities. Across the state, as well as here locally, there has been minimal transmission within the schools. However, officials at MDH have said the COVID -19 virus is, for the most part, spreading [outside of the school](#). The transmission of the infection is happening in the community settings, at family and social gatherings.

We want our kids in school as much as possible and parents have said you also want your kids in schools. As more and more of our society continues to open, schools are having to go the other direction. We know of only one way that gives us the best chance at safely keeping our kids in school, sports and activities. Not only do we have to be sharp in school, but our students and families need to remain sharp outside of it.

We need your help. This information is nothing you haven't already heard, but bears repeating as it's going to take all of us to make a difference. Local public health along with our healthcare providers, support us in asking you to please help us keep cases low and our kids in school by following the [guidelines offered by MDH](#).

- Avoid crowds
- Keep family and social gatherings outdoors
- Stay 6 feet away from others
- Wear a mask
- Wash your hands
- Stay home when you are sick

Please follow these guidelines as they are for your kids and our students.

Sincerely,

Stearns County Superintendents

Greg Johnson, Albany Area Schools
Patrick Walsh, BBE Schools
Mark Messman, Eden Valley Watkins Schools
Chris Swenson, Holdingford School District
Erik Widvey, Kimball School District
Greg Winter, Melrose Area Schools

Matt Bullard, Paynesville Area Schools
Brad Kelvington, Rocori School District
Jeff Schwiebert, Sartell-St. Stephen
Patrick Westby, Sauk Centre Schools
Willie Jett, St. Cloud School District
David Fremo, Diocese of St. Cloud