

Dear Families,

At tonight's board meeting, the school board approved a plan to begin the school year with At-Home (virtual) learning for all students during the first quarter with a gradual reopen as Dane County metrics and Public Health Madison Dane County guidance allows. Here is the [Back-to-School Update](#) document that was presented to the board related to the current data within Dane County, what it means for our back-to-school plans and the recommended approach to the beginning of the school year based on this data and information. WDEE taped the board meeting which can be viewed on their website at [wdee.org](http://wdee.org) within the next few days.

This was a very difficult decision to make for the administration and the school board. We all agree that in-person learning for our students is the best instructional model for many reasons. If you had asked me a month ago, I would have told you that I thought we would begin the year in-person with many safety precautions in place, but the data and metrics for Dane County changed drastically over the past four to six weeks. To be at this point is disheartening from a county health standpoint, but it truly feels like the most appropriate option when considering the health and safety of our students, staff and families. That being said, it does not make the decision any easier.

I want to reiterate what I shared last week in my email to staff and families which is that our plans include much more structure for at-home learning. We heard from staff and families that a more thorough, rigorous online learning plan is essential to keep kids on track for learning grade level and subject specific curriculum. We have already started putting those pieces in place by establishing learning management systems at all grade levels, purchasing additional online curriculum to support and supplement our curriculum, and providing professional development to staff to ensure that our at-home (virtual) learning model will be more robust than what we were capable of in the spring with the sudden closure.

We know and understand that families and students will have many questions about the beginning of the school year. We will be sending out a family survey within the next week to gather information about specific at-home learning needs as we plan forward.

We can continue to expect that the circumstances surrounding the pandemic will be unpredictable for some time and will continue to require flexibility and patience. As I have stated previously, our best work for our kids is staying positive and being open to the unexpected opportunities this situation brings to us in new ways. It is important to remember that we all have the best interests of our children in mind.

Sincerely,  
Michelle R. Jensen  
District Administrator