

To Parents, Students, Staff, and Community Members

From: Dr. Christopher E. Mills

Re: "Focus on the Future – Back to School"

Date: 8-10-21

As we approach the start to the 2021-22 school year, there is a great deal of information in the public regarding schools and the rules/requirements that will be in place for our school year. At this time, we have been informed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) that although there continue to be major concerns centered around COVID and the impacts for the unvaccinated population, decisions about public school attendance will be made locally outside of transportation. At this time, we are mandated that all students and adults on public transportation must mask-up. Based on this information, here is our plan to start the 2021-22 school year:

- All students and staff will have the option to wear masks at school. We will support this option and provide disposable masks for students and staff that select this option.
- Social Distancing is a recommendation of the CDC and MDH. We will make efforts to comply with the current recommendations of 3 feet in classrooms during the school day.
- Health Screenings – All students and staff are asked to screen daily and stay home if symptoms are present. It is important that if your child is ill that you keep them home until 24 hours after their symptoms have improved. This includes being fever free without the use of medication, no vomiting or diarrhea, improvement of cough, congestion or runny nose, etc. for a minimum of 24 hours.
- Quarantine – Student and staff that are not vaccinated will be required to quarantine if exposed to someone that is identified as being positive for COVID. The amount of time of the quarantine is under review at this time and will be established before the school year begins. Currently, we are following the guidance from last year.
- Reporting – We continue to be required to report all positive cases to MDH and MDE.
- Food Service – All of our students will continue to receive food service in the cafeteria. We will strive to meet all recommendations established by the MDH, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and MDE. We are very fortunate that all meals will be paid for by the federal government during the 2021-22 school year. It is still EXTREMELY important that everyone fill out the applications for FREE and REDUCED MEALS. This application not only impacts meal pricing, but funding for our school in several areas. If you have any questions, please contact that school office at your convenience.
- Cleaning – We will continue to follow the practices and procedures established during the 20-21 school year. We believe these practices led to a very clean and healthy environment for students and staff.
- Water Fountains – We will continue to utilize the touchless water fountains and encourage students to bring clear water bottles to school.
- Accommodations – If a child or staff member requires additional accommodations, please contact the building administration to review.
- Partnerships – Stephen-Argyle Central will continue to collaborate with Marshall County Public Health, Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Department of Health, Alluma, Northwest Service Cooperative, and regional school districts to create a safe and secure learning and work environment for the school.

A reminder that we will be hosting the Fall Activity meeting Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. to review expectations for 2021-22 and our Operating Referendum vote that will be held November 2<sup>nd</sup>. This meeting will be followed by a Town Hall meeting with County Law Enforcement at 7:00 p.m. to discuss current community concerns. These meetings will be held in the new gym in Stephen. We expect that there may be changes throughout the school year, but this information is our plan to date. We encourage anyone that has questions or concerns to contact Dr. Christopher E. Mills – [cmills@sac.k12.mn.us](mailto:cmills@sac.k12.mn.us) or 218-478-3315/218-437-6615. Thank you for your continued support as we focus on the future of Stephen-Argyle Central.