

Superintendent's Message

Greetings WCA Community Members

Like all Minnesota School Districts, our students and staff have spent more than a full calendar year dealing with the impact of COVID-19. Restrictions placed on us have caused the elimination of many of the enrichment activities students typically experience while other opportunities have been restricted.

As we entered into Spring, MDH restrictions were relaxed and our students have become able to participate in some activities that were not possible last year. Schools still need to comply with MDH restrictions and guidance such as masking and social distancing that remain, but some exceptions have been allowed.

I am thrilled that music performances can resume this spring. Vocalists may temporarily remove face coverings during indoor musical performances. Face coverings must be replaced when the song is completed and social distancing is to be maintained throughout the performance; six feet between performers and twelve feet between performers and the audience. The same exemptions apply to musicians playing woodwinds and brass instruments.

Events hosted at our school facilities will continue to have capacity restrictions and most events will be managed by distribution of tickets/passes to the participating students. Some events will have assigned seating while others are treated as a general admission and guests will need to space themselves.

WCA will permit field trips that can be accomplished while following the guidance for social distancing, masking and transportation. We are restricting field trips to the Twin Cities this spring due to recurring protests, violence and potential safety risks to our students and staff.

Last year, outdoor spring sports were cancelled but this year they are underway; with face covering and social distancing requirements mandated by MDH. The MSHSL recently sought a mask exemption for competitors from MDH. On April 22nd, this announcement was shared by the MSHSL: *Masks/face coverings are no longer needed for student-athletes in outdoor contests and practices when they are actively engaged in competition and/or practice.* Face coverings are still required indoors and when athletes are not actively competing. I am glad this change has been made for our spring athletes and I am thankful spring sports can be offered this year rather than cancelled as they were in 2020.

Grant County is experiencing an increase in COVID-19 rates but our school buildings have not seen a corresponding increase. Currently we have no reported active cases among our students and staff and only six students and no staff members are quarantined. This success can be attributed to student and staff compliance with stay-safe precautions. Another factor that will help to protect our staff and students is that approximately 80% of our faculty, counselors and ECFE staff have completed their COVID vaccinations.

We are about five weeks away from the end of a school year that has forced us to function much differently. I recognize the last 13 months have not been easy for any of us. However, we have seen WCA students, teams, and staff excel in their respective areas. I am so proud of the students who have remained active learners and participants through our COVID months and of the staff who incorporated new instructional methods and activities. There have been disruptions and challenges at home as well and I am grateful for the perseverance of parents and for their support and understanding.

With only a short time left in this school year, I encourage everyone to continue with the stay-safe precautions that have helped the majority of us stay healthy. I hope everyone has a great ending to a very challenging year and an enjoyable summer.

