

September 1, 2020

Dear Warrior Family,

Welcome to the 2020-21 School Year!! Whether you and your children are returning to school this fall via the hybrid or distance learning model, the Brainerd Public Schools community is ready to return to learn. After six months away from our buildings, we are eagerly anticipating our students return to school on Tuesday, September 8, 2020.

As promised in previous communications, I want to keep you informed about important decisions that have been made at the district level and details for this unprecedented return to school. I apologize ahead of time for the length of this letter; however, there are several questions being asked that I want to address with you. I have included updated information on the following topics:

1. Back-to-School Open Houses: On Wednesday, September 2, 2020, Back-to-School Open Houses will be held at the new Baxter, Lowell, Nisswa and Riverside Elementary Schools. Students and parents are invited to attend at the designated times below, which are determined by the first letter of their last name.

Baxter, Lowell & Nisswa Elementary Schools

3:00 p.m. – A-E
3:30 p.m. – F-J
4:00 p.m. – K-O
4:30 p.m. – P-T
5:00 p.m. – U-Z
5:30 – For those who can't make their scheduled time

Riverside Elementary School

3:00 p.m. - A-D
3:30 p.m. - E-H
4:00 p.m. - I-L
4:30 p.m. - M-P
5:00 p.m. - Q-T
5:30 p.m. - U-Z

Harrison and Garfield Elementary Schools: Will have no open house until later this fall.

Lincoln Education Center: 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Forestview Middle School, Brainerd Learning Center and Brainerd High School: Will have no open house this fall.

2. Learning Model Calendar and Dismissal Times: Brainerd Public Schools will begin our school year implementing a Hybrid Learning Model for Grades K-5 and for Grades 6-12. The Board of Education has approved 1:1 technology for all K-12 students, certified staff and those supporting distance learning to meet our educational needs. Devices for students in preschool to 12th grade doing the All Distance Learning option can be picked up today and Wednesday, September 2, 9am - 2pm, at the Washington Educational Services Building, 804 Oak Street in Brainerd. Enter through the back side of the building next to the loading dock and follow the signs. Please wear a mask and maintain social distancing. For faster service, please come with the acknowledgement form [HERE](#) signed. Students doing in-person learning will receive their device at school once it begins.

Students in Grades K-5 will attend school in person every day. Extensive safety measures will be enforced and a shortened school day will be implemented. (See COVID-19 PM Bus Window below.)

Students in Grades 6-12 will attend school on an AA/BB schedule. In a regular week, students in the AA group will attend on-site Monday and Tuesday with Distance Learning on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Students in the BB group will attend on-site on Thursday and Friday with Distance Learning on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Students in Grades 6-12 will also have a shortened school day on the days they attend on-site. (See COVID-19 PM Bus Window below.)

School	COVID-19 PM Bus Window
Baxter	1:30-1:37
Garfield	1:35-1:45
Harrison	1:35-1:45
Lowell	1:35-1:45
Nisswa	1:35-1:45
Riverside	1:35-1:45
Forestview	1st wave 1:35-1:43 2nd Wave 1:43-1:51
High School	2:00-2:15

A revised calendar will be put in place for students in Grades 6-12 for shortened school weeks. (Please see the calendar below.) Due to the shortened week from September 8-11, 2020, AA students will attend on Tuesday and Wednesday. BB students will attend on Thursday and Friday. Please be advised that two weeks prior to the beginning of each new month, we will send out an updated calendar for the coming month to address any shortened weeks. (Ex. Ed MN in October)

Monthly Calendar Updates - For the first month of school

	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S		In Session	
Sep			1	2	3	4	5			
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Labor Day 9/7	4	
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		5	AA
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		5	BB
	27	28	29	30					3	DL

3. Brainerd Safe Learning Plan: On July 30, 2020, the Minnesota Department of Education required school districts to develop a safe learning plan for hybrid, distance and in-person learning model implementations and all supports needed to meet the needs of our children and families. Please be reminded that we are prepared to interchange learning models at any time during the school year should the COVID-19 numbers significantly increase or decrease as per the CDC, MDH and county recommendations.

Brainerd Public Schools has spent a significant amount of time developing a comprehensive and on-going explanation of our Brainerd Safe Learning Plan. For your convenience, I have attached a link so you can find information regarding the Brainerd Public School's Safe Learning Plan [here](#). This document will be updated on a regular basis in an effort to keep you informed of changes and schedules brought forth.

If you have further questions, I have attached a copy of the Frequently Asked Questions document for your review [here](#).

For information on the All Distance Learning option, please see the sheet [here](#).

4. Health Screenings and Safety Measures:

Health Screenings - Brainerd Public Schools will be following the current Center for Disease Control and Minnesota Department of Health guidelines surrounding health screenings. Parents, students and staff are asked to monitor for potential symptoms including: a cough, fever, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, new loss of taste or smell, body aches, headache or sore throat. If a child or staff member has any of the above symptoms unrelated to an existing condition such as allergies, they should stay home. If symptoms develop at school, students and staff will be screened by a school nurse and parents will be contacted if their child needs to be picked up to go home. Full details regarding the Health Screening can be found [here](#).

Safety Measures - Brainerd Public Schools has ordered and received a significant number of face coverings, masks, and shields that students and staff are required to wear. A face covering will help prevent you giving germs or a virus to another person, especially if a disease is showing no symptoms. A face covering, however, does not prevent you from getting COVID-19, they are a secondary protection. Primary protections include: washing your hands often; covering your coughs and sneezes; and social distancing. To be effective and acceptable to wear at Brainerd Public Schools, face shields must come from the forehead down past the chin.

To ensure the health and wellness of our children and staff, additional safety precautions are being implemented at Brainerd Public Schools:

- 50% classroom capacity
- Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff
- Routine cleaning throughout the day
- Disinfecting every evening
- Hand washing stations in every classroom/learning station
- Health screening/assessment by nursing staff for students or staff concerned about symptoms
- Separate health space for staff/students exhibiting symptoms
- Increased air circulation in buildings
- Lunch in small cohorts or classrooms
- Hand washing training by nursing staff
- Face covering training by nursing staff
- Hiring a district COVID-19 Coordinator who will collaborate with county and state health officials
- Closing buildings to nonessential visitors, meetings, and activities

5. Emergency Child Care: Brainerd Public Schools will offer emergency child care to families with students who have at least one parent or guardian working for an employer defined by the state of Minnesota as Tier 1 on days the student is not scheduled for in-person learning. In the hybrid model, emergency care will take place at Forestview Middle School for students in sixth through eighth grade on their three assigned distance learning days. This service is being offered at no cost. Students will be provided breakfast, lunch, and snacks each day, or they can bring meals from home. The hours of operation are 7:30am until 3:00pm. Please click [here](#) to enroll in Emergency Child Care. Please be advised that this option is not available for families who chose the term-long Distance Learning model.

6. Amended School Calendar Changes: At the August 24, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, an amended calendar was approved for the [2020-21 school year](#). At this meeting, the board approved up to five E-Learning Days, to replace any potential weather-related days or any time the

Superintendent decides that learning cannot occur on site this coming school year. Since all students have a district-provided device, students can learn remotely on any given snow day; therefore, February 15 and April 5, 2021 will be considered non-school days for students and families.

7. Blueprint181 Update: When you return to school this fall you will see incredible and beautiful changes to the Baxter, Nisswa, and Harrison Elementary Schools and Brainerd High School/Performing Arts Center. We are most thankful for our community's generous support of our Blueprint181 referendum, which was voter-approved on April 10, 2018. Please watch for future communications as we are in the process of planning for the grand openings at Harrison, Nisswa, and Baxter Elementary Schools. We hope to have a dedication ceremony at each of the buildings, in October or November, depending on COVID-19 protocols.

During the coming school year, continued construction will occur at Brainerd High School and Garfield, Lowell and Riverside Elementary Schools. We will also begin construction on the Warrior Early Learning Center and South BHS Campus/New Lincoln Education Center. We appreciate everyone working with us to continue our facility projects while at the same time ensuring safety and well-being of our students, staff and contractors during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Due to extensive construction in all school neighborhood areas there are additional precautions that must be implemented for student safety. If dropping off or picking up your children, please make sure your children are let off/picked up on the side of the street nearest the building and sidewalk. For safety purposes, we want to ensure that students are not crossing the street, in non-crosswalk areas, to get from their parent drop-offs to and from the school building.

8. My Sincere Thanks: Over the past six months, our teachers, paraprofessionals, food service workers, technology, administration, building and grounds, transportation, support staff, business and district offices team members, along with guidance from the Board of Education, have rallied and pulled together to plan and lead the educational excellence our children and families so deserve. All of this has been completed while meeting the extensive requirements as set forth by the Minnesota Department of Education. This endeavor never could have occurred without everyone working together on behalf of our strong and healthy public education system in Brainerd. Not only did we accomplish success with our distance learning model last spring, but we are confident that we have the right plan for educating our children in a hybrid model this fall. Brainerd Public Schools is ready to adjust our learning model option at any time during this school year as determined by the [14-day case rate range](#) in Crow Wing County. Thank you for this partnership as we are truly ready to return to learn.

As a result of the challenges being addressed, our 2020-21 Back-to-School theme could not be more pertinent: "When Life Gives Us Lemons... We Make Lemonade." Working together, we have done just that. We have taken this proverbial expression to encourage optimism and a positive can-do attitude, while in the face of adversity. Unquestionably, we are Brainerd Warriors! Have a wonderful, safe and healthy school year... ***"Welcome Back to Brainerd Public Schools!!"***

Respectfully,



Laine D. Larson
Superintendent of Schools
Brainerd Public Schools - ISD 181

District Mission Statement: Independent School District 181, in partnership with the community, will ensure all students achieve their individual potential by providing the highest-quality programs and resources to prepare learners for an ever-changing global society.