



DISTRICT OFFICE

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Debra Hunt, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
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Dear Parents:

Following this letter is detailed information regarding the start of the 2020-2021 school year. The 2020-2021 Planning Committee has been meeting since the beginning of June to help make the transition into what is likely one of the most difficult school years we will ever experience, as smooth as possible. As we planned, one focus became very clear. For the Valders School District to be as successful as possible, we all (staff, students, families and community) must all work together.

Some of the items regarding next school year that you may want to know about are stated below. Please know that many of the specifics will be shared by your building principal when we get closer to the start of the school year.

- Face coverings are required to be worn by everyone. Students are to wear facemasks. Face shields will be okay for students in grades 4K-2 as well.
- There will be face covering breaks throughout the day. We know wearing face coverings all day long can be too much for children. When students are stationary and are able to socially distance they will be allowed to take face covering breaks as directed by teachers and other staff.
- We will not be able to do temperature checks for every student entering the building. We are relying on parents and guardians to provide temperature and overall health checks on their children each morning. If a child does not feel good, they must remain home. Teachers and staff will be very vigilant and if a child does not feel good, or if they have a fever during the school day, parents will be called to take their child home.
- Sanitation Stations – there will be hand sanitizers in every entrance and classroom. Additionally, elementary teachers will have students sanitize their desk tops and other work areas before or after they leave and return to the classroom. The middle school and high school classroom teachers will have students sanitize the desk tops and other work areas two minutes before the end of each class. The teachers will also make sure light switches and door handles will also be sanitized.
- Our Director of Building and Grounds has purchased a number of misters, which are machines filled with special sanitizing formula that can spray large areas like classrooms, bathrooms, locker doors and other areas. This will quickly and easily sanitize areas at night, or when places are unoccupied during the day.
- Isolation rooms are sick rooms specifically designed for children who may be ill with COVID-19. There will be barriers, and the adults who are assisting children will be wearing personal protective equipment to keep the children and themselves safe.

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- Parents will not be able to enter the school to pick up or drop off their children, or items for their children. Parents will need to wait by the school entrances to pick up their children.
- We are hoping students will bring their own bottles and use the bottle fillers. There will be some water coolers (bubblers) available and they will be sanitized throughout the day.
- We also anticipate that some families will plan on having their children participate in online learning from the beginning of the school year, while other parents will plan on sending their children to school. A survey will be utilized to determine which parents need to have their children complete their learning online.
- The same survey is being utilized to determine which families plan on sending their students to school on the school bus.
- All students in grades K-12 will receive a Chromebook, and 4K students will receive iPods. The plan is to be as paperless as possible. This will additionally help lessen the spread of germs.
- We believe that in-person learning is most effective, and want as many students to attend traditional classes as much as possible. However, if we do need to move to a hybrid model of learning, one group of students will attend classes on Monday and Tuesday, while the other group stays home for instruction those days. The students at home will be able to log in and watch the teacher's lesson(s). Then, on Wednesday and Thursday, the other group will come to class and the first group will stay home and learn online. Teachers will have the opportunity to be equipped with a headset for all to hear them, as well as document cameras can be used to ensure all will be able to view the lesson whether they are at home or in the classroom.
- There will be Parent Training Sessions in early September. The training sessions will be for parents to learn more about Chromebooks, Google Classrooms, and other technologies that the students will be using. We want the families to be informed and knowledgeable of the technology that the students will be working with.

We know that people will not like, or will disagree with, some or all of the decisions that had been developed and determined. We will need to respond to the disagreements with kindness. Kindness is understanding that the school district is making decisions considering all points of view, all aspects of the health of our students and staff, along with the guidelines being provided at the federal, state, and local levels. We are all doing the best we can, with the resources we have, under the circumstances we have been given. Thank you to the many families and community members already having respectful conversations about next school year's plans. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and opinions.

When we return to school please respond with kindness. Please respond with kindness when a school secretary informs you that you can't go somewhere you are used to going to; please respond with kindness when an athletic coach cancels practice; please respond with kindness when a teacher asks something of your child that neither person has had to deal with before. Please help teach your child to respond with kindness when asked to follow new guidelines and rules. We all can use more kindness.

While there will be many and different challenges in front of us all, I know we can work together to ensure that the students, families and staff of the Valdres Area School District are safe, healthy and ready to begin the school year. I look forward to continuing the adventure with all.

Sincerely,

Deb Hunt
Superintendent of Schools