

Dear Whiteside School Community,

At the conclusion of last night's special school board meeting, the Whiteside Board of Education voted to move in-person instruction to a hybrid format. This decision was made based on our current enrollment percentage of in-person learners and social distancing requirements to keep students and staff safe. A hybrid model takes our registered in-person learners and splits them into two groups. Both Whiteside schools will move to a hybrid format to start the school year. In general, students (and their siblings in the district) will be divided into two groups based on last names. Each group will be assigned two days a week to attend school with Fridays as an every other week rotation. Students will be provided with work on the days they are not in attendance. Per the Illinois State Board of Education Guidance Document, the at-home work should equal 5 hours per day spread over the course of the different subjects offered at school, which is similar to our requirement with full remote learners. Students with Individualized Education Plans will be attending school 4 - 5 days per week to meet the needs of these students. The Special Education Department will be working with families to devise these schedules.

Due to the timing of this change, Whiteside School District will adjust our start date for all students from August 17 to August 27. We hope this change will provide families enough time to make the learning decision that is right for them. The Board of Education understands that this decision will strain families due to daycare needs throughout the district. Parents wanting to switch to full remote may still do so by contacting each school's office and completing the necessary paperwork by August 14. Parents should expect an In-person Instruction Hybrid Plan and possible transitions between Full Remote/Hybrid/and Blended In-person (5 days a week) plans by Monday, August 10. As parents review these changes and updates, the district will assign student groups by Tuesday, August 11.

Whiteside School District understands the fluidity of the COVID situation within St. Clair County and our school district and we are working to provide parents a transition plan for the different phases of possible instruction within our school district. Families should understand that this phase chart could be adjusted by state mandates or updated information from the Illinois Public Department of Health. Data collected from families during the return to learn survey supported a need for in-person instruction, whether it was a traditional in-person or a hybrid model. We referred to this data when making our recent decision to provide a hybrid form of in-person education.

Thank you,
Mark Heuring
Superintendent