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Conrad Public Schools COVID-19 Release

Conrad Students, Families, Staff, and Community Members:

After many hours of collaboration between Conrad Public Schools Administration, state, and local health authorities, the decision has been made to return to in-person instruction within Conrad Public Schools. **K-12 in-person instruction will resume on Monday October 12, 2020.**

This was a difficult decision in light of the current local pandemic situation. There is no escaping the fact that our community is in the midst of a significant COVID-19 outbreak. If we, as a community, are unable to reverse this infection trend, it is very apparent that our District will lose the ability to make a decision between remote and in-person learning. Currently the Pondera County COVID test positivity rate is around 10% and climbing. Recommendations are to begin limiting social interactions at around 5%. If our community continues this trend of increasing infection rates, the only option that we will have is to engage in remote learning. With that being said, after this recent wave of infections and the resultant testing and response, there have been no indications of the virus spreading within the schools. We have had confirmed positive staff and student cases enter each of our 4 schools. However, we have shown that we were able to limit transmission once it entered the school. Much of this success has to do with the hard work of our local health department, health services, district prevention strategies, as well as our 2 weeks of remote learning and some luck. **As a District, we will do all we can to help reduce transmission risks during the school day. However, our success is equally dependent on what our students, staff, and community does to reduce transmission outside of our school buildings.**

After having gone through the extensive process of contact tracing and being able to identify areas in our prevention strategies that require improvement, there will be some changes to expectations while in school buildings. We will continue to monitor, assess, and improve what we are doing at the school to increase our chances of remaining open for in-person instruction. There will be adjustments to our activities, athletics, and fan attendance plans. As we improve and finalize these strategies our priorities will be to keep our students doing in-person participation safely.

Thank you for all the efforts everyone has made to keep our students and community safe. It is clear that having students engaged with in-person schooling is critical to their success. In order to continue to do in-person instruction safely, we all have to improve our virus transmission prevention behaviors. Please continue to improve the use of facial coverings, social distancing, and hand washing/disinfection/hygiene. Our students, staff, district, families, and community all need to increase our efforts to reverse the infection trend in order to keep our students in school, and our community safe.

Sincerely,

Sean Beddow, Superintendent  
Conrad Public Schools