



# Hurley School District

5503 W Range View Drive  
Hurley, WI 54534  
Hurley.k12.wi.us



Kevin Genisot, District Administrator/Special Education Dir.– Ext. 258  
General Phone: 715-407-4777  
District Office Fax: 715-716-4290  
Principal Office Fax: 715-716-4452

Breanne Lombardo, Finance Director – Ext. 209  
Melissa Oja, 6-12 Principal/DAC – Ext. 218  
Steven Lombardo, PreK-5 Principal/Athletic Director – Ext. 307  
Kellie Hitter, PreK-12 Secretary – Ext. 206

## Hurley School District School Reopening Question and Answer Document *as of July 29, 2020*

**Q:** *Who is the 'health committee' comprised of and what is their purpose?*

**A:** A special committee was created to determine what the most appropriate plan would be for starting the 2020 - 2021 school year. The committee consists of the following members:

Kevin Genisot - District Administrator  
Melissa Oja – Middle/High School Principal  
Steven Lombardo – Elementary Principal/Athletic Director  
Sarah Eder – School Counselor  
William Trcka - Head of Buildings and Grounds  
Dawn Rye – Food Service Supervisor  
Kellie Hitter – School Secretary  
James Saari – Bus Company Manager  
Katie Hampston – Iron County Health Department – Health Officer  
Melissa Geach – Iron County Health Department - RN  
Melissa Talsma – Local RN  
Michelle Harma – Local Nurse Practitioner

Many of the committee members serve multiple roles representing many groups from parents, extra-curricular enthusiasts, educators, medically knowledgeable and community involved workers, and all department supervisors that are directly involved in the Hurley School District. The sole purpose of the committee is to provide a recommendation to the Hurley School Board of Education to help them decide on how the school year would start. The State of Wisconsin strongly encouraged partnering with the local health department in determining the most appropriate steps going forward. Including other medical professionals within our community on the committee helps to broaden the view. Having 12 members allows the group to be manageable as well as provides a reasonable representation of many groups.

**Q:** *Why is the district waiting so long to make a decision about starting school?*

**A:** If a decision needed to be made today, it's almost certain that the Hurley School District would be starting in an all-virtual offering. To provide the best chance of starting in-person, we need to hold off on the final decision until August 17<sup>th</sup>. Local health data has changed rapidly which significantly influences our options and the recommendation.



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**Q: *Other districts have rolled out a plan, why hasn't Hurley?***

**A:** Almost all districts have stated that they are holding off until early August to make a decision or have announced they will offer an in-person, online, or blended option for all students. If we were looking at health data from March through early July, it would be relatively easy to state we would be in-person and roll out a specific plan to start the year. We certainly don't want to mislead students, parents, or community and roll out changed plans after changed plans, so we tried to keep it very simple. If we had to make a decision now, it would most certainly be a virtual offering, but we want to do everything possible to provide an opportunity to get students back in the building. Holding off to see how the local health data looks in a few weeks will be key in determining our next steps. Regardless of how the year starts, parents need a plan for both in-person and virtual offerings as both plans will probably be utilized throughout the year as health concerns arise and fade. It's quite probable that we may cycle back and forth between both options throughout the entire year.

**Q: *What changes have been made in the school to provide a safer environment?***

**A:** The Hurley School District has installed touchless faucets, touchless soap dispensers, and touchless paper towel dispensers in all bathrooms throughout the school. We have ordered mobile hand sanitizer stations to alleviate the congestion and provide reminders and additional opportunities for students to use when needed. We have a technician reviewing the air filters and air rate exchange system we use to ensure we are doing everything we can to help mitigate the risk of exposure. We will have thermal temperature readers to monitor all students and staff entering the building. We have remodeled the office to accommodate for a safer way to interact with people. We have changed the way we will offer breakfast and lunch to allow for a safer delivery system. We will continue to make changes in the coming weeks to better prepare for student arrival and will announce those when everything is finalized.

**Q: *What changes will be made to the typical routine for students?***

**A:** Students will need to practice social distancing and will have markings on the floor to help dictate traffic as well as provide a clear direction. The schedules may be altered to alleviate student congestion during high traffic times. Elementary students will most likely need to have lunch in the classroom to help keep cohorts together and do our part to make the environment as safe as possible.

**Q: *Will face coverings/face shields be required for all people entering the school, including all students?***

**A:** It's quite probable that face coverings or face shields would be required for all students and staff. If a student qualified under a 504 or had a disability, the IEP team could determine specific requirements unique to that student. Face covering certainly does mitigate the risk of exposure, but to what level is certainly debatable. Students who do not qualify for an exclusion to this requirement would be offered an online option.



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**Q: *If the district goes to all online, what will that entail and how would it be different than how last year ended?***

**A:** It would be vastly different than how we ended the last school year. Teachers would be in the classrooms providing daily instruction by maintaining a school schedule. They would be instructing from the Smartboard or within the classroom and still be delivering high quality instruction to students but in a virtual manner. Students would follow a virtual schedule that would be similar to the schedule they would have in person with modifications. For students not able to attend a live class meeting, we will record and provide an additional opportunity for students to receive the curriculum. Of course, many clarifying details would be rolled out when the plan is finalized. The big takeaway is that the students would have a daily schedule that would mirror being in-person. Of course, age and amount of support each student has makes learning more achievable or more difficult when an online format is used.

**Q: *Are students going to be behind this year because of how last year ended and what are teachers going to do differently this year to accommodate the learning loss?***

**A:** There's little doubt that the level of learning loss students have this year will be greater than in past years and that will be a focus area for all teachers to monitor. Teachers will need to determine the most appropriate actions to remedy the situation, whether that would require whole class instruction or remedial support in small groups. Teachers determine this every year in September so this year would be no different in that respect.

**Q: *With everything kids have been hearing and reading about the current crisis and world happenings, how does the school plan to help support the parents in ensuring the mental health of each child is monitored and supported.***

**A:** We want to collaboratively partner with all families to ensure each child is cared for in a manner that supports the academics as well as the mental health areas. The school counselor will be administering a frequent survey to better help gauge the feelings students have and then determine the support students may need. Staff will be cognizant of the mental health needs of the student population and utilize available resources.

**Q: *What are the most realistic options being considered at this time?***

**A:** All virtual, all in-person or a blend with a possibility of having a section most impacted such as PK-8<sup>th</sup> go in-person and 9-12 start virtually, have all been discussed. The option that's decided on August 17<sup>th</sup> may not even be one being considered at this point as the fluidity of the situation and the difficulty in predicting the health factors in our community in 2-3 weeks are vastly unknown and extremely unpredictable.



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**Q: *How is the district planning on meeting the needs of every family?***

**A:** Regardless of how we start the year, the district will offer a virtual option to any student. Knowing that virtual learning doesn't replace or meet the same level as being in the classroom, we are confident we can collaboratively work with both parents and the students to accommodate each student's needs.

**Q: *Can the district assure parents that all students will be safe in the building?***

**A:** The quick and honest answer to that question is no, but we can assure parents that the district will take every reasonable step to mitigate the risk of contact and spread of the COVID-19 virus. Placing almost 600 people in a building comes with many situations where socially distancing is not an option nor is reducing the amount of time people have close contact with one another.

**Q: *Will sports be taking place as during a typical year?***

**A:** Sports have been delayed and further direction will be given once we know how the school year will start, what the WIAA recommends, and what our conference schools are in agreement with doing this year.

**Q: *Why are some districts able to begin in-person and others are going all virtual?***

**A:** Local conditions dictate what options districts have going forward. Having little or no positive COVID-19 cases puts districts in a different position as does having a high or significantly increased rate of cases. It's dependent on the dynamics happening within the community.

**Q: *Does the health department have the authority to quarantine students and staff?***

**A:** Yes, they do have the authority to quarantine staff and students. They do not have the authority to solely dictate how the school year starts.

**Q: *What source of information will be used in making the decision to return to school?***

**A:** The following information will be used:

- 1.) The Committee's Recommendation
- 2.) The local statistics of Gogebic and Iron Counties
- 3.) CDC guidelines
- 4.) Pediatricians guidance
- 5.) Department of Human Services Guidance
- 6.) Parent survey results
- 7.) Staff survey results
- 8.) Local districts in CESA 12 and Michigan schools
- 9.) Other information not determined or known at this time



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**Q: *We have heard many opinions about who makes the decision of returning to school, so who does actually make the final call?***

**A:** The school board will sift through a lot of information including the recommendation of the committee, which includes the health officer for Iron County, and then ultimately be responsible for making a final decision.

**Q: *If the district does go back to all in-person, will there be options for parents to have their child still go online?***

**A:** Yes. We are exploring options to have cameras in classrooms to provide an opportunity to those attending virtually to stay connected to all classes in real time. It certainly will be more challenging and will require more parental support than ever in order to make this be as effective as possible.

**Q: *There's a survey going out to parents on Monday. How will the results be used?***

**A:** The school board will view the results and use them as one source of information before making a final decision on how the school year will start.

**Q: *What's your best guess as of today if we will be starting school in-person or virtually?***

**A:** It changes daily, but if the numbers continue to climb the chances of starting in-person decrease. If the number of cases stabilizes or decreases the chances of starting school in-person increase.

**Q: *Will everyone be satisfied and happy with the final decision or the decisions made throughout the school year?***

**A:** We speak daily with parents that want their child to attend school virtually, attend in-person, attend in-person without masks, or attend in-person with masks. Many are undecided how they feel or their feelings change by the week. In the end, the high emotions and stress everyone has leads us to believe this will be a decision that does not make everyone happy.

**Q: *I still have unanswered questions, so who can I call?***

**A:** Steve Lombardo, Elementary Principal/Athletic Director – (715) 407-4777 ext. 307  
Melissa Oja, Middle/High School Principal – (715) 407-4777 ext. 218  
Kevin Genisot, Special Education Director/District Administrator – (715) 407-4777 ext. 258