



*COPESD School Leaders Community Partnership Message on Health and Safety  
November 2020*

Dear Cheboygan, Otsego and Presque Isle County School Families and Community Partners,

As superintendents representing the public schools throughout the three county region, we'd like to first thank you for continuing to entrust the education of our region's students to our dedicated staff, in spite of the ongoing spread of COVID-19. Together, we've been able to serve students and families through these first months of the school year despite the unprecedented challenges. Your willingness to work with us during this pandemic has been critical in keeping our schools safe and open across the region. Our community schools are at their very best when we are closely working together, and it is with this in mind that we are reaching out to you. We want to keep our schools open to meet the needs of students and families in our region, and we all need to pull together if we want to make that happen!

While our districts stand ready to transition to remote learning if needed, the importance and value of face-to-face instruction and serving our students in school each day can not be overstated. The collective work of school staff, students, families, churches, agencies, businesses and government has made a significant difference and we must continue our efforts in the challenging days ahead if we want to keep our schools open. Despite the ongoing fatigue that is being felt, given the recent rise in positive cases, we cannot afford to let our guard down given what is at stake. As you may have recently heard, our region's health experts and partners at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan and DHD#4, are reporting significant increases in positive cases while sounding alarms about the weeks that lie ahead. While all of this may feel overwhelming, please know that by taking simple measures such as social distancing, limiting gatherings, and wearing masks can help mitigate the spread within our communities.

While everyone looks forward to the day when this current pandemic can become part of a history lesson, in the meantime, our communities' diligence will play a key role in putting this behind us. Through ongoing collective efforts and diligence in following the [attached CDC guidance](#), we can and will get through this together and mitigate any further spread.

Our schools plan to continue to provide the opportunity for as much in-person instruction as possible throughout this school year. We all know just how important the overall educational experience is for the students we serve, as witnessed this past spring throughout the closure period. Our local schools serve vital roles in meeting the multifaceted needs of students, families and communities. Let's continue to work together to keep ALL opportunities available for our children, both academic and extracurricular.

Thank you for your continued efforts, understanding and partnership to keep our schools healthy and safe in order to meet the educational needs of our region's students during these challenging times.

Yours in Partnership and Education,  
Superintendents of the Cheboygan Otsego-Presque Isle Educational Service District

Paul Clark, Cheboygan Area Schools  
Jamie Huber, COPESD  
Brian Pearson, Gaylord Community Schools  
Brad Jacobs, Inland Lakes Schools  
Katy Xenakis-Makowski - Joburg-Lewiston Area  
Jeff Curth, Mackinaw City Public Schools

Rod Fullerton, Onaway Area Schools  
Michelle Wesner, Posen Consolidated School  
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Lee Sandy, Vanderbilt Area School  
Matthew Baughman, Wolverine Community School