

August 6, 2020

Hello Anser Families,

This evening the Anser Board of Directors held a Special Meeting. Below is some important information for families as a result of the meeting.

Remote Start for the School Year:

The Anser Board reviewed the determination from Central District Health that all schools in Ada County are in the Red/Category 3 condition. The Board of Directors reviewed this information as well as additional metrics that are included in the Responsive Return Plan to approve a Category 3/Remote start on August 25th. The Board heard from staff and families regarding their concerns related to starting in person and starting remotely.

The Covid Response Board and Staff committee will review data each Monday for the prior two weeks. Shifts between categories will be communicated one week prior to implementation, except when advised by public health officials to move immediately into a higher Category due to community conditions or Anser-specific conditions.

Understanding that delaying an option for in-person school presents enormous challenges for many families, the board weighed the decision carefully and directed staff to begin outreach to families that may be most impacted by the decision. Staff will ensure that Anser will be providing additional layers of support during this period of remote learning. Here is a link to information from the [Boys and Girls Club](#) about the services they will be offering which may be a support to some families.

Transportation:

The 2020-2021 school year was planned to be Anser's inaugural year of offering transportation. However, as the impacts of Covid-19 on school operations have become more clear, the Covid Response Team and Anser Board of Directors did not feel confident that the school could develop guidelines for bus ridership that would keep our students safe while also guaranteeing funding for the program. This year has already brought nearly \$200,000 in unanticipated costs to ensure the safe operation of school during Covid-19. The Board determined it was their fiduciary responsibility to the school to mitigate any additional financial risk and to ensure that Anser's resources were used in the best way to support our students during this challenging time. We understand this will be a disappointment for some, and will create real challenges for others. The Co-Directors ask that if this decision will create hardship for your family when in-person school begins, to please contact them to collaborate on ways to overcome this barrier.

Revised Responsive Return Plan Approved:

The Covid Response Team received valuable feedback on Anser's Responsive Return Plan from Anser families and staff. Based on that feedback more detailed information regarding parallel learning was included in the revised plan. Additionally, a team comprised of the Covid Response Team and the Continuous Improvement Committee of the Anser Board, collaborated to more clearly define the data that Anser will use to define which category of operation the school will function within. The Final Responsive Return Plan will receive one final copy edit review and then will be emailed to all Anser families and placed on the Anser website.

Category Guidelines for Anser:

When the Covid Response Team released the Draft Anser Responsive Return Plan for feedback, we heard repeatedly that people wanted a transparent definition of how Anser will determine which Category the school is in. Central District Health has developed the Red/Yellow/Green (Category 3-2-1) guidelines, but the data they use while varied and important is not transparent to the public. Parents, staff and board members alike were concerned that because the public has no access to the data used to make those decisions, they were unable to make a determination of whether they felt confident in the outcome. Based on these shared concerns, the Covid Response Team collaborated with the Continuous Improvement Committee of the Anser Board to develop Category Guidelines that include publicly available data, used by public health experts around the world to guide decision making about re-opening schools. These Category guidelines are outlined in the document [linked here](#), which also includes information about the decision making process the committee will use to move from one category to the other.

Registration:

While Anser is starting the year in Category 3 (Red), we are still asking families to register for Parallel or In-Person learning by Sunday August 9th. This will give us the critical information we need to plan staffing and protocols based on the number of students who may be on campus when conditions allow. If there is information you haven't received that you need to be able to make your decision, please reach out and we will be happy to try to answer your remaining questions. Please also remember that if your circumstances change, the Anser staff will do our very best to work with your family to meet the needs of your student. Reply to this email and we will route your message to the right person. Complete your student's registration using [this link](#) by Sunday, Aug 9th.

Reflection and Revision:

Anser is a school built upon the shared, reflective practice of educators, parents, staff and board members. As we move through this school year, into a time that is filled with unknowns, we believe it will be important to reflect with our community on how things are working and how they could be improved. In order to create space for this reflective process to happen we will be sending a bi-weekly survey to hear from families about their successes, challenges, unmet needs and ideas for revisions to plans. Michelle and Heather will also continue to host virtual office hours to be able to speak directly with families during this time that we can't all be together. While we have gained some experience from school closure in the spring, there are many challenges that lay ahead that none of us can yet anticipate. But we are Crew, and we can work together to meet these challenges, in service to each other and to our community.

Somos Crew/We Are Crew,

Michelle Dunstan, Education Director
Heather Dennis, Organization Director