

Conestoga Public Schools Townhall

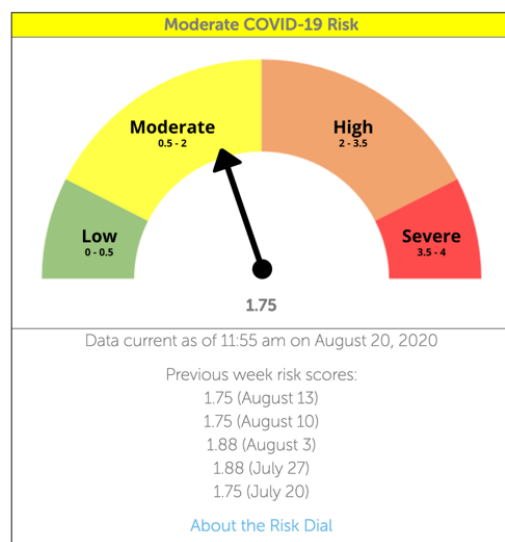
DR. BETH JOHNSEN, SUPERINTENDENT

WELCOME BACK TO THE NEW-NORMAL SCHOOL YEAR

We're finishing our second week of school with students in the buildings and also students at home (remote learners). Everyone is so open-minded of what they need to do to keep the schoolhouse open and programs thriving. Students and staff abide by the safety guidelines of social distancing (6 feet+), handwashing, and wearing masks, when they can't social distance with others. We are so proud of everyone's efforts to make our school a better place and a great place to learn!

A huge THANK YOU to everyone for working together and taking each day with positive stamina.

Sarpy/Cass Health Department COVID-19 Risk Dial



COVID-19 Jargon

You may have heard of the Risk Dial that is being discussed on the media. The Health Departments share information to the public via these dials. The dial is intended to give an overview of the current risk of COVID-19 in Sarpy/Cass counties. This guidance does not replace a federal, state, or local directed health measure. As a school district, we use the dial as a resource for the virus spread.

Here's the Sarpy/ Cass Health Department Website

Risk Dial: <https://www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org/>

Another useful resource at the same Sarpy/ Cass Health website is the Active Case Overlay:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/175314bdea6f402abd7948e4a80af7ae>

This resource gives the specificity of the locations of active positive cases.

The district uses the Risk Dial and other local/state/federal resources, but our District Reopening Plan follows Governor Ricketts Phase Plan. Currently, Cass County is in Phase 3, as per the DHMs. Here's the current document that we are following:

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/SCHD-DHM-August1.pdf>.

Our ReOpening Plan is in the Green Design (Low/ No Spread). If or when the Governor changes our Cass County's DHM, then the school district will change our procedural plans for school and instruction. Until then, we're doing well and thriving in school~!



STUDENT SERVICES

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, MRS. WRIGHT

Conestoga staff has been continually working on improving procedures to ensure students with COVID related symptoms and students who are required to quarantine due to COVID are able to participate in remote learning. We understand that students who are going through the identification and quarantine process may miss out on large portions of learning. We are dedicated to minimizing lost learning time. When dealing with COVID procedures, there are many variables to consider and it can often be confusing. We have developed Remote Learning Decision Making Processes for both the Elementary and the Jr./Sr. High in the hopes that we can make the process a little easier to follow. See the graphics below for more details.

Elementary Remote Learning Decision Making Process

MY CHILD IS SICK BUT IT IS NOT COVID RELATED.

Follow regular absence procedures

Does NOT qualify for remote learning.

MY CHILD IS SICK WITH COVID RELATED SYMPTOMS.

1. Call your child's healthcare provider.
2. Notify Dawnelle Martin of symptoms.
3. Follow regular absence procedures

Does NOT qualify for remote learning. Child is on standby for return to school upon health directive clearance.

MY CHILD HAS BEEN EXPOSED OR AWAITING COVID TEST RESULTS.

1. Contact Dawnelle Martin of symptoms and COVID process.
2. Follow regular absence procedures

Does NOT qualify for remote learning. Child is on standby for return to school upon health directive clearance.

MY CHILD HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH COVID AND/OR REQUIRED TO QUARANTINE.

1. Contact Dawnelle Martin to update status and in-district protocol begins.
2. District representative contacts family to share remote learning information.
3. The district has up to 2 school days to begin the remote learning process.

DOES qualify for remote learning.

Jr./Sr. Remote Learning Decision Making Process

MY CHILD IS SICK BUT IT IS NOT COVID RELATED.

Follow regular absence procedures

Does NOT qualify for remote learning.

MY CHILD IS SICK WITH COVID RELATED SYMPTOMS.

1. Call your child's healthcare provider.
2. Notify Dawnelle Martin of symptoms.
3. Follow regular absence procedures
4. The school will contact parent(s) and student(s) about Remote Learning.

MAY qualify for remote learning. Child is on standby for return to school upon health directive clearance.

MY CHILD HAS BEEN EXPOSED OR AWAITING COVID TEST RESULTS.

1. Contact Dawnelle Martin of symptoms and COVID process.
2. Follow regular absence procedures
3. The school will contact parent(s) and student(s) about Remote Learning.

MAY qualify for remote learning. Child is on standby for return to school upon health directive clearance.

MY CHILD HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH COVID AND/OR REQUIRED TO QUARANTINE.

1. Contact Dawnelle Martin to update status and in-district protocol begins.
2. District representative contacts family to share remote learning information.
3. The district has up to 2 school days to begin the remote learning process.

DOES qualify for remote learning.

FINDING THE POSITIVITY IN COVID TIMES

JR./SR. INSTRUCTIONAL COACH, MS. LEWIS

"A great attitude becomes a great day which becomes a great year!" As many of you reminisce on Pre-Covid Times, you may find yourself thinking about the times that didn't require a mask or social distancing. Unfortunately, we are not back to that point of life... yet. With media coverage, it is easy to dwell on the negatives and the old "normal." At Conestoga, we are fortunate enough to have supportive families that are helping keep all of our students safe and in the building. Our kids have adapted extremely well with the issuing of masks; they have embraced the new transition of classes; they exhibit upbeat personalities when greeting staff as they enter the door and sanitize; and most importantly, they have found a way to exhibit each of their extraordinary personalities through a mask and under pressure of their new "normal." Positivity radiates the hallways and the lunchroom. When I reflect on my life as a high school student, I could not image the pressure and uncertainty that each of our students feel, everyday. However, I remain more and more impressed each day by their adaptability and upbeat personalities. Even our remote learners have reached great levels of communication to continue their education remotely. As we continue on our journey, I hope we continue to find the positivity in each situation so we can take the great of each day to finish out with a great year!

A NOTE FROM THE JR./SR. HIGH PRINCIPAL

MR. ROB GEISE

We've had an outstanding start to the 2020–2021 school year! The teachers and students are working hard to ensure the year is a great one. We have many new rules and procedures in place to keep students and staff safe during our current situation, but our staff and students are handling them with flexibility and a positive attitude. We're excited to be back in the building and we will do whatever it takes to stay in the building. I want to thank our entire school community for making the start of the school year such an awesome experience for everyone. We're looking forward to keeping the positive momentum going.

NEW FACES IN THE JR/SR HIGH BUILDING:

ReAnn Schreiner: HS Math

Nick Hegge: HS Social Studies

Brooke Iverson: JH English / LA



Adjustments have made to hallways, lockers and passing periods to keep out students safe.



Classrooms are designed to keep students safe and when social distancing cant occur, masks are worn.



Teachers are utilizing outdoor space for classrooms.

TECHNOLOGY CONESTOGA PUBLIC

Schools continues to stay on the cutting edge of technology in the state of Nebraska. We continued to make that better by purchasing all 7th and 8th grade students new iPads (with a keyboard) to start the 20/21 school year. As a 1 to 1 district, the school continues to implement and utilize technology on a daily basis, preparing our students for future success. This commitment has allowed our students to be successful, especially during our current situation.

Helpful Links

District Webpage: www.conestogacougars.org

PowerSchool (Grades): <https://conestogaps.powerschool.com/public/home.html>

Activities: <https://www.eastcentralnebraskaconf.org/public/genie/455/school/1/>

Jr/Sr High School: <http://conestoga.schoolwires.net/Page/11>

OUTSTANDING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the outstanding students and teachers that we have at Conestoga Jr/Sr High School. Every day I'm amazed at the great things our students accomplish. They are polite and respectful young people that represent our community to a very high standard day in and day out. They put our students first, they grow and try new things every day, and continually do great things for our students. They truly care about each and every student in our building! Please make sure to contact any of our staff members if you have questions regarding your student's academic progress.



GO COUGARS!!

SKILLS USA MR. BURNS



SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. We help each student excel. A nonprofit national education association, SkillsUSA serves middle-school, high-school and college/postsecondary students preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service (including health) occupations.

SkillsUSA started last year at Conestoga and we are currently looking for new members. If your student is interested in the skilled trades, a healthcare profession, cosmetology, computer science, law enforcement, firefighting, culinary arts, or photography as a potential career/hobby in the future, this club may be for you. What we do: Students will have an opportunity to form their own club. As a group we will elect officers and hold monthly meetings to arrange fundraising, as well as, develop career focused skills, and community based services.

This year students will have the opportunity to compete at the state conference in Grand Island. Students can select a competition based on what they are passionate about and compete statewide. If interested in joining you can find more information at the SkillsUSA website (skillsusanebraska.org) and you should contact Mr. Burns in room 406 or by email at rburns@conestogaps.org. Announcements will be made for our first meeting in September.

CONESTOGA FFA KICKS-OFF SCHOOL YEAR MS. TAYLOR

Conestoga FFA kicked off the year with the first chapter meeting on Wednesday, August 26th. Students had donuts and chocolate milk for breakfast and talked about upcoming events (listed below). Wednesday, September 23rd: Chapter Meeting Tuesday, October 6th: Land Judging Thursday, October 15th: Pink Out Game & Concessions Saturday, October 24th: Trunk or Treat at Beaver Lake Clubhouse If you are interested in joining FFA, contact Ms. Taylor at ktaylor@conestogacougars.org!



2020-2021 FFA Officers:
Jennifer Sedlacek, Lindee Watson, Dakota Salmon, Jordan Slafter, Grant Nickels, Evan Svanda, Tobias Nolting



Nineteen FFA members attended the kickoff meeting on Wednesday, August 26th!

CONESTOGA AWARDED COLLEGE ACCESS GRANT MRS. KREIFELS

In Nebraska our students and parents are lucky enough to have access to the services provided by EducationQuest. EducationQuest Foundation is a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve access to higher education in Nebraska. EducationQuest provides free college planning services, need-based scholarship programs, college access resources for middle schools, and outreach services for community agencies. They have offices in Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney, and Scottsbluff. Their website also has numerous resources on it: educationquest.org.

Another service that EducationQuest provides to high schools is the opportunity to apply for their College Access Grant. The College Access Grants program provides funding for Nebraska high schools that seek to develop or enhance college access activities within their school. Conestoga has been awarded this grant for the next 4 years. We are looking forward to being able to provide many opportunities to our students to improve that college going attitude and college access.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT CORNER

MRS. BERGMAYER

I am so excited to say the 2020–2021 school year has officially begun! Students and staff are doing an excellent job adjusting to new routines and procedures. The resiliency of our community is truly inspiring! We have begun testing students to determine their current instructional level in order to best meet their needs going forward. Below you will also see test dates that will be occurring during the year.

Please note that the ACT will have a fall date and a spring date due to the situation last spring. The fall ACT is for Seniors and the fall Pre–ACT is for Juniors. All families, but especially remote learners, please be sure you have returned the Remote Testing contract sent home in parent packets.

lisabergmeyer@conestogacougars.org

Conestoga School District's 2020-2021 Assessment Schedule			
Assessment	Grades	Testing Window(s)	Purpose
NWEA Map Growth Testing	3rd-11th *2nd	Fall: August 25th-September 11th Winter: December 1st-17th Spring: May 11th-14th (Screener)	The purpose of MAP Growth is to determine what the student knows and is ready to learn next. MAP Growth can track students' individual growth over time – wherever they are starting from and regardless of the grade they are in.
AIMS Web Plus	K-2nd	Fall: August 25th-September 4th Winter: December 1st-17th (January 5th-8th if needed) Spring: May 4th-14th	AimsWeb Plus is used for benchmarking, universal screening, diagnosing strengths and weaknesses in Reading and Math, and for progress monitoring.
Pre-Act	10th and 11th	October--TBA	PreACT simulates the ACT testing experience within a shorter test window on all four ACT test subjects.
ACT	*12th 11th	*September 22nd March 23rd <i>In case of emergency, additional dates are also slotted.</i>	The purpose of the ACT test is to measure a high school student's readiness for college, and provide colleges with one common data point that can be used to compare all applicants. College admissions officers will review standardized test scores. In Nebraska, all Juniors are required to take the test.
NAEP	4th, 8th, and 12th	Random Selection-TBA	The NAEP reading assessment measures the reading and comprehension skills of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 by asking them to read selected grade-appropriate passages and answer questions based on what they have read.
NSCAS	3rd-8th	March 22nd-April 30th	The Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS), pronounced "en-skass," is a new statewide assessment system that embodies Nebraska's holistic view of students and helps them prepare for success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life.
ASVAB	11th	TBA by Mrs. Kreifels	The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a heavily researched and well-respected aptitude test developed by the Department of Defense. It measures a young adult's strengths and potential for success in military training.

*all dates subject to change due to health restrictions

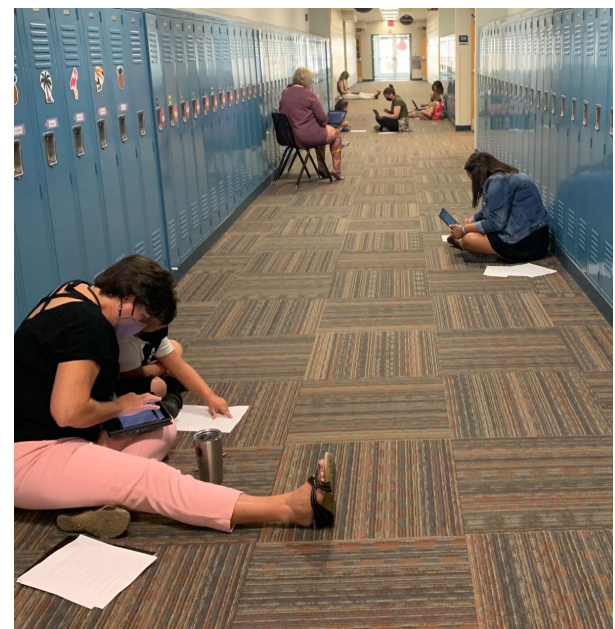
A NOTE FROM THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

MR. ERIC DENNIS

Welcome to Conestoga Elementary school. I am excited to get the school year started and look forward to seeing our students grow throughout the year. The school year may have started out looking a little different than normal, but our vision has not changed. If you are a remote student or attending school in person, we believe every student can be at or above grade level in reading and math by the end of the school year.

This year our teachers are instructing students in person and remotely. This is certainly new for everyone involved, but we know we can make gains with all of our students including our remote students. Just a reminder to our remote students, make sure you are logged into every class each day and be engaged in the lessons. All students, read every day at home and practice your math facts for 15–20 minutes.

In order for our students to grow it is important parents, students and school staff form a tri-partnership. That home partnership is crucial for student growth. Working together, there is no limit to what our students can achieve.



ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL COACH

MRS. TONKIN

On August 6th, we officially welcomed the Conestoga Staff back to school. After a 5 month hiatus from in-person school, our staff was more than ready to be back in the buildings preparing to teach students. Even though each teacher knew that this school year would be different and challenging, that did not dull their excitement or enthusiasm for getting back to the job they love most— teaching and connecting with our students at Conestoga.

To help our teachers feel more confident in their abilities to reach each child this year, whether remote or in-person, we set up a "Virtual Learning Day." Teachers were able to select and attend various training sessions via Zoom. These sessions were led by our district Curriculum Director, Instructional Coaches, and staff from ESU3. Topics for the day included: Google Classroom, Social and Emotional Learning, Flipgrid, Zoom Classroom Tools, Essential Content in Math and Reading, Differentiation, Equity in the Classroom, Brain Breaks, and an informational COVID chat with our district nurse.

While this year will be a year of adaptability, patience, and grace, our staff at Conestoga has been so excited to be back doing what they love. They are taking on the changes to our normal school routine with positivity and flexibility, and I am very proud to be part of this amazing group of professionals.

NEWS FROM THE PTO

Welcome to the 2020–2021 school year! Like everyone else, the PTO has had to take a step back and social distance ourselves. We were unable to meet many of you at open house, host our annual back to school breakfast, welcome our teachers and staff on the first day and rethink how we can support our Cougars from a distance! Are we sad? Yes...but we are going to do our best to make this year special and we'd love your help.

Who is the Conestoga Parent/Teacher Organization? You are! Conestoga's PTO consists of ALL parents and staff of Conestoga Elementary School, and it is absolutely FREE...no fees to be a member! Each year, the Conestoga PTO sponsors several events, including a fun/glow run, book fairs, skate parties, ice cream social, teacher appreciation, Cougar Hollow-ween, Spring Carnival and much more. We donate about \$20,000 to our school each year which provides funding for field trips, technology needs, playground equipment, music and educational programs, physical education equipment, books for our library and classrooms and other teaching materials to each of our 26 classrooms and approximately 400 students. Each child and teacher at Conestoga Elementary directly benefits from the efforts of the Conestoga PTO.

We love new faces, familiar faces and haven't seen you in awhile faces. Ready to join us?

- Who: We welcome ALL parents and staff to every meeting, as there is no PTO without YOU!!
- When: We host our monthly meetings the first Tuesday of the month at 6pm. Please note, this is a new earlier time than years past. We are hoping the new earlier time will make it easier for many of you to attend. Meetings will last one hour or less.
- Where: Your house, your couch, you name the spot!! Our meetings will be virtual for the foreseeable future
- How: Stay tuned to parent square for meeting login information and be sure to like Conestoga Elementary PTO on Facebook for updates, upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. We would love to see you online the first Tuesday of the month at 6pm! Thanks in advance for all your support! #cougarstrong



ACTIVITIES AT CONESTOGA

ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR, MR. JASON AHRENS



The 2020 activity season is underway and though it looks a little different then it has in the past it's off to a positive and exciting start. Thank you to everyone who is helping make this happen. Specifically, the students participating and the coaches/sponsors leading the way. The effort and time given by everyone is appreciated and plays a huge role in creating the environment and culture we are working to establish at Conestoga. Also, thank you to the community members who continually cheer on and support our Cougar students and programs. Due to Covid-19 this year fan attendance and procedures will look a little different then it has in the past. The procedures and protocols for all Cougar home events and the most up to date information on our away events can be found on our school website www.conestogacougars.org underneath the Covid 19 Information tab. Fall Poster and pocket schedules can be picked up at any Cougar Contest.

VARSITY HOME EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

09-01-20 @ 7PM VOLLEYBALL V. MALCOLM

09-11-20 @ 7pm Football v. Palmyra

09-17-20 @ 6:30pm Softball v. Fort Calhoun

09-22-20 @ 7pm Volleyball v. Syracuse

09-25-20 @ 7pm Football v. Lourdes Central Catholic



CONESTOGA VOLLEYBALL

COACH, MS. KYLEIGH LEWIS

The volleyball season for Conestoga's Lady Cougars has started! The Lady Cougars opened their season against JCC on Monday, August 24th in a jamboree game. These 18 extraordinary ladies have put in countless hours during the off-season and summer. Many enrolled in club volleyball programs, attended camps, and worked as a team during open-gyms. They all exhibit a passion for developing new traditions and building a strong program as their legacy. They continue to push the limits to ensure their season ends the way they hope with many wins and personal growth. The 2020 team consists of the following Lady Cougars:

Seniors: Taylor McClatchey, Myah Cummings, Naomi Simones, and Jozlyne Kozak

Juniors: Allison Lewien, Hannah Lewien, Addison Andersen, MaKenna Crook, Lindee Watson, and Bella Basino.

Sophomores: Amelia Gocke, Sophia Tegels, Sophia Ackerman, Chloe Brodersen, and Catherine Ramirez

Freshmen: Mariah Crook, Zoe Geneski, and Evelyn Murdoch.

With Covid-19 protocols, make sure you check before attending away games and follow all our home game expectations to ensure we keep our athletes safe and in play. Cheer our Lady Cougars on from home by watching at https://youtu.be/gU49K_iRius.

Score updates will be pushed out through our Twitter Account, @C1stogaV.

Conestoga Public Schools
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