



NEWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

September 10, 2021

Cardinals,

The Newton Community School District works very hard to communicate openly with our students, families, staff, and community. We strive for that communication to be timely, accurate, and meaningful. The lines of communication are essential for a smooth operation and we always look for ways to improve the process.

During the September 7, 2021 Special Board Meeting I provided an explanation of the different types of absences reported through Infinite Campus (our student information system). The Newton Community School District enters absences into the system for each student each day. Those absences are for many different reasons: illness, appointments, school activity, and others. Previously, appointments such as orthodontists, counseling, and chiropractors were listed as medical appointments and figured into the absence rate for illness. This is no longer the case.

Starting with the September 9, 2021 student absence rate data, the percent of students absent due to illness will reflect absences related to actual illnesses only. This is in line with the [Iowa Department of Public Health common child illnesses](#). Any absences for routine appointments or appointments which are not related to the illnesses as described in the IDPH document, are listed as medical. They are still reflected in our average daily attendance but not the absences due to illness.

In order to report out the most accurate information possible, it is necessary for the school district to collect some basic information when a student is reported absent from school. The school staff may ask a few questions to determine if a student is ill from school or absent for another reason. This will assist in our efforts to determine the amount of illnesses in our buildings.

I appreciate your cooperation with our data collection. Your assistance is key to our accurate and relevant communication. We will continue to follow our [Return to Learn Plan](#), and monitor any health situations daily. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 641.792.5809.

Yours truly,

Tom Messinger, Superintendent

Newton Community School District

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