

January 14, 2021

Dear Parents and Staff,

Over the last two weeks, we have reflected on the status of our schools after returning students and staff at the K-6 level to school in full. In consultation with Donna Culbert, Director of Health, we have continued to review the many factors that contribute to safety and health across the school community. At the district level, our experience has reliably demonstrated that the ongoing and consistent use of mitigation strategies and additional precautionary measures have worked well in diminishing the risk of transmission, despite ongoing cases in the community.

We feel that with the same level of effort, we can return our 7-12 students back to school in a safe manner. The design of our secondary school schedule, which was approved by the Board of Education on October 6, mitigates the risk of students gathering to eat and further addresses the inability for appropriate social distancing in these spaces. The schedule includes a Grab and Go lunch and the final class conducted from home via remote learning (Wednesdays – last two classes).

Currently, we have over 700 students district-wide who remain in Cohort D as remote learners. The number of remote learners, as well as the daily absences that occur, will decrease the density of our populations. At the high school level, students will continue to be allowed to come in late or leave prior to the daily dismissal schedule if they do not have classes during that window of time. We will continue to be flexible for those students who need to stay home and join classes remotely due to ongoing illness or potential symptoms.

The following are important reminders to ensure a level of safety in our schools:

- Masks must be always worn during bus transportation, in classrooms, and throughout school buildings.
- Self-checks at home are important (temperature, symptoms), and families need to keep students home when they are ill or symptomatic.
- Visitors will not be allowed unless an appointment is made by a building leader.
- Students will be asked to use desk shields, when appropriate, and staff have access to desk shields, face shields, and other PPE as additional measures of safety.
- Ongoing cleaning and sanitization of touchpoints and other areas of the building, including bathrooms, will continue.
- The potential for quarantining will not change, and all members of the school community must understand that compliance is necessary. Through contact tracing, it may be determined that an individual had a close contact with a positive case and will be asked to quarantine for 10 days.

The CIAC has notified us that the winter sports season (practices) will begin on January 19<sup>th</sup>, but no State Championships will be held. No competitive cheer, competitive dance, or wrestling will be allowed. Only small group conditioning will be allowed for those sports. Games will not begin until February 8<sup>th</sup>. The CIAC Board of Control worked closely with the State Department

of Public Health on the plan to resume the athletic program with appropriate mitigation strategies and precautionary measures in place.

Families should continue to reach out to building administration if they choose to move their children to Cohort D (remote learning) at any point in time.

Thank you and stay well.

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent