

June 18, 2020

Dear Deerfield Families,

It seems odd to say that summer is finally here! Our 12-week separation from school and from each other is still a bit surreal. The year finished quietly for most but also with great fanfare for our senior class. Thanks to all who helped celebrate our seniors by waving along parade routes or cheering on as staff made home visits on graduation Sunday.

I would like to thank you once again for all that you did during the school closure to help your child(ren) stay connected to learning and connected to our staff. We know it was a big change that took place in a matter of 48 hours. Your ability to adjust on short notice and create at-home learning was amazing. It was a long three months and as we heard from many, you hope not to do this often. We agree, we don't want to either and hope school closures will be minimal, if at all, next year as scientists continue to work on a reliable vaccine.

The administration continues to work on plans for the fall considering a variety of options. Those range from being back full time, to continuing virtual learning at home, to a blended model which would allow for some in-school attendance and some virtual learning at home. While much has been discussed, we are waiting for the Department of Public Instruction's school reopening guidelines to be released on Monday, June 22. We expect to use that guidance along with additional guidance from Public Health Madison Dane County, Department of Health Services, and the CDC to create a plan for the fall. Our goal is to create the safest plan possible while best preparing for the educational needs of our students. As those plans unfold, we will be sure to keep you informed.

For now, we hope that you will enjoy some of the usual summertime activities that bring physical, mental and emotional breaks to your daily life. We know that through all of this change, kids and adults alike need to continue to attend to their own emotional health as we cope with new changes, new ways of being together (and apart), and new challenges that present themselves along the way. Our best work is staying positive, leaning (figuratively) on each other when we need a break, and being open to the unexpected opportunities this situation has brought us in new and positive ways. I continue to marvel at the greater number of kids I see riding bikes, the families I see taking evening walks, and the animals that are getting more exercise than ever before. I think I even saw some families that added new pets to their family during this time!

Please continue to check your email for updates throughout the summer. Our typical plans for fall sports, back-to-school registration, school pictures and many other events, are likely to look much different as well. Our best way to stay connected is via email. We will also continue to post on our district Facebook page, share information with the Independent newspaper and WDEE.org.

Until then, stay well,

Michelle R. Jensen