

Dear Families,

It seems hard to believe that we have passed July 4th on the calendar! We have been planning forward for a new school year while we wait for additional guidance from Public Health Madison Dane County. As you can imagine, these decisions are very complex as the data changes and the research evolves which is why planning takes extra time and consideration. Our priority is to begin a new year of student learning in the best ways possible with the least risk possible based on the most current science-based evidence.

We know that the spring was not easy on kids, families or staff. We know that kids missed out on academic learning as well as social and emotional learning and physical activity. We know that not being a part of spring sports, music contests and club activities was disappointing to many. I wish we had a crystal ball for how fall will look in terms of community spread of COVID-19. We don't, but we do have many plans created depending on the guidance that should be coming out from Public Health Madison Dane County within the next week.

There are three plans we are working on at this time. Our preferred back-to-school plan would be to have full in-person attendance, if this is deemed an acceptable approach by county public health officials. We have measured classrooms to plan for desks to be placed six feet apart for social distancing, we have hand sanitizer and/or hand soap readily accessible in every classroom, we have protective measures guidelines, hygiene guidelines and facility cleaning guidelines in place, and we will have face masks ready for everyone (even a school spirit mask!). The guidelines will be stringent, but are necessary to mitigate the risk of exposure and transmission when we welcome students and staff back to school.

If we are not able to return in full attendance, we have secondary plans ready for a blended model of instruction with students coming on alternate days. We know this poses a difficult burden for working parents and is not the best fit for student learning or staff instruction, but we would put this plan into place if needed. We also have plans for at-home learning for students who might not be able or ready to return to the school setting for medical, behavioral or developmental reasons. Additionally, at-home learning plans will be needed in the event that our school should need to close again. Regardless of which model of education, our plans are to continue learning in the fall with grade level/subject specific curriculum that will be introduced and maintained through the school year even if we start the school year together and have to close at a later date.

Once Public Health Madison Dane County releases their guidance for schools, we will finalize our plans with the school board in the next few weeks to share with families. I sincerely apologize for the delay; county health professionals are working diligently to create guidance based on current data and research on the virus. It is a very complex situation that continues to evolve daily. We appreciate your continued patience and support as we continue to work through this very unique and unprecedented situation.

Sincerely,
Michelle R. Jensen