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Greetings Everyone,

It's hard to believe that the school year is more than 10% complete. Progress reports were scheduled to be completed on October 2, however, they will be postponed to Oct 9.

As we try our best to support students through remote learning, there is no substitution for direct instruction. This is especially true for our youngest learners. We are preparing to transition to full in-person instruction on October 5. We will be returning to school five days a week. It is likely that Wednesdays will convert to an early release day (half-day) during the months of October and November. This will require that we revise our school calendar, which will need Board approval.

It is important that schools have your updated email addresses and phone numbers as we try to provide parents and guardians updated information in a timely manner.

As we transition into a full in-person model, teachers will have less time to post videos for our fully remote parents. We will continue to link videos to important instructional topics to support fully remote students. We are creating stipend positions to support fully remote students after school hours, which may not be your child's currently assigned classroom teacher.

I frequently monitor the Department of Public Health website's COVID related updates and regularly communicate with area leaders. As we prepare to enter into a full reopening model, I know some people have questions regarding how far school desks should be separated in the classroom. The SDE suggest "six feet when feasible" and the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests "three to six feet when feasible,"

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>.

On Friday (9/25), I participated in a Webex with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the State Department of Education (SDE). I asked, why is “when feasible” added to the guidance.

Tom St. Louis from DPH stressed that making classrooms safer is about implementing several mitigation strategies simultaneously. When one of those strategies is unavailable, or not implemented to the fullest degree, we rely on the other strategies to make up the difference. In Canterbury, we are requiring students to wear masks, use desk shields, use sanitizer, promote hand washing, disinfect desks daily, and use physical distancing. In addition to our mitigation strategies, our community currently has a low rate of people testing positive for COVID-19. While we may not be able to reach six feet between desks in all settings, we are implementing a lot of proactive steps to make classrooms safer.

DPH also shared that across the state they have not had cases of classroom transmissions. They clarified that statement by sharing they are not seeing multiple students in the same setting testing positive for COVID-19. Nearly all of the cases have been traced to non-school activities.

While we move forward to a full in-person learning model, it is also possible that we will need to revert to a hybrid model or a fully remote model. It will be important for families to be prepared to adjust child care needs if such an abrupt transition is required.

I would like to end my message by thanking our students and parents. Each school principal has shared that student behavior has been exceptional and students are doing their part to support our efforts to keep everyone safe. Also, supporting our students would not be possible without parent participation. Your efforts to support and teach your children while they are at home in a remote learning environment is critical. We understand this is not easy and we appreciate your flexibility and patience.

In Partnership,

Steve