



January 20, 2021

Dear students, staff, families, and community,

Snow is in the forecast this weekend and next week. Just a reminder that weather and closure information is available on our website at <http://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/>. You can also go to [www.flashalert.net/id/Mt.BakerSD](http://www.flashalert.net/id/Mt.BakerSD) to sign up for direct e-mails and/or to download FlashAlert Messenger App to iPhone or Android. If there is inclement weather without substantial power outages, we will conduct school remotely and students will be expected to attend. If there is inclement weather with substantial power outages, school will be canceled. There will be no late starts for the remainder of this school year, but we may need to implement snow routes. Robocalls and emails will also be sent if there is a district-wide remote day or a cancelation of school.

Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> is Treaty Day. This important day in history is significant not only for our local tribe/all tribes but because the Lummi Nation and United States of America entered into an agreement on how we share the land between the two independent sovereign nations. I am sharing a wonderful video created by the Lummi Nation and Ferndale School District which celebrates the importance of the Point Elliott treaty that was signed on January 22, 1855. [Lummi Nation & Ferndale SD Treaty Day Recognition, 2021.](#)

Mount Baker School District is moving forward with implementing a hybrid teaching and learning model along with a remote option on February 2<sup>nd</sup> for secondary students and increasing in person learning time for elementary students on February 8<sup>th</sup>. While the community COVID-19 rates are high, the Whatcom County Health Department continues to support our plan to increase in person learning. I have had questions regarding the alignment of our plans with the K-12 In-Person Learning Provisions Toolkit. Despite the metrics referenced in this document, schools are encouraged to provide in person learning for the following reasons:

- Community transmission rates are not a hard threshold. They are considered along with other conditions.
- Wide range of WA school operating statuses in counties with moderate and high COVID rates (remote, hybrid, in person).
- Research and experience show limited evidence of transmission in schools across WA and US when mitigation strategies are implemented. Schools do not appear to be the drivers in raising community transmission rates.

- If schools are practicing mitigation measures and transmission in schools remain suppressed, school operations can continue.
- Schools are a controlled environment with layers of mitigation.
- Whatcom County Health Department works closely with school district administrators, nurses, and COVID-19 coordinators to review operation status, prevention measures, and respond to cases and outbreaks to control spread.

Please see [WCHD's January 19 revised recommendations](#) for more information and understanding of why Mount Baker School District is moving forward in the best interest of our students.

Thanks to elementary families for completing the survey if you want to change your child's mode of learning. Mount Baker Academy enrollment will continue to stay open, but we ask that you stick to your decision regarding full remote or hybrid learning as we are making final adjustments in staffing. Starting February 8<sup>th</sup> elementary and secondary students will be on buses together. Because we are scheduling families in the same cohort this just makes the most sense for routing. More information about bus routes will be shared soon. I am confident that I can count on our secondary students to be helpful role models for our younger students during these bus rides. Reverse the Baker Bus on Wednesdays will continue to deliver meals. Students will also be able to eat at school for free. You can do both. There will be a new updated form in February.

With new WIAA Guidelines our sports seasons are moving forward. We plan to restart our weight training program with modifications on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The Northwest Conference is starting fall sports in February. Football and Cross Country will begin February 1<sup>st</sup> followed by Volley Ball, Girls' Soccer, and Cheerleading on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Our first athletic event could occur as early as February 13<sup>th</sup>. We are installing cameras allowing us to stream events for spectators. We have not made a firm decision on spectator in person attendance. A full season calendar, as well as a summary of current guidelines issued by the Washington Department of Health, can be found on the WIAA's COVID-19 page at <http://wiaa.com/COVID>.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in February!

Go Baker!

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