

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Serving the Communities of Alhambra, Grantfork, Highland, New Douglas, and Pierron

MICHAEL S. SUTTON
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



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ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT - INSTRUCTION
TIMOTHY C. BAIR
BUSINESS MANAGER

June 23, 2020

Dear Highland CUSD No. 5 Stakeholders, Parents, Staff and Students:

I hope this message finds you and your families safe and well. Since March 17th the country has endured an extremely challenging situation with COVID-19, unlike anything any of us had ever imagined. We survived the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year with scars that will likely last for years. I know that everyone is eager to know the future and how our everyday life will be impacted as time moves forward. We too have been waiting for guidance from the State regarding possible Return-To-School in August. Today, the Illinois State Board of Education released guidance for schools on the 2020-21 school year.

This 60-page document has been much anticipated. It will go a long way toward answering critical questions, about what the 2020-21 school year will look like, in terms of in-person learning, scheduling, transportation, wearing masks, social distancing and other measures intended to keep everyone safe and healthy, while also re-engaging students in the learning process.

Right now, we don't have all the answers to those questions as this document was released to school districts today, just as it was released to the public. Therefore, we kindly ask for your patience as our staff thoroughly reviews this detailed guidance and implements the suggestions into our district's own transition plan. We are keenly aware of the urgent need to communicate to families about what to expect next school year, and we anticipate releasing our own transition plan in mid-July.

As you may know, our district has already been discussing options and identifying challenges associated with the anticipated parameters. This guidance will accelerate those conversations, and I'm confident our district can put forth a plan that prioritizes the health and safety of our students, while maintaining a dynamic learning environment.

Thank you again for your patience, understanding, and flexibility as we all navigate a situation together that none of us could have imagined.

We will be in touch soon. In the meantime, stay safe and enjoy your summer.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Sutton
Superintendent