



MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

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<http://www.merps.org>

July 15, 2020

Dear Meridian Mustang Families:

The last few months have been very difficult for our community as we have faced the challenges of both COVID-19 and dam failure. No one could have predicted either of these events or provided guidance on how schools, families, and communities should respond. We are now asked to tackle the task of rebuilding our community and coming up with plans to return to learning this fall.

There is still a tremendous amount of uncertainty as we head into the 2020-2021 school year. We face additional uncertainty due to the potential loss of students as a result of the flood and the certain loss of state funding due to COVID-19 that may result in historically large cuts in school funding. Fortunately, we are well-positioned to overcome these challenges. We will continue to support our students with one-to-one technology, provide free internet services, and be a statewide leader in education.

On June 30th, the Return to School Advisory Council issued the 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap. The Roadmap provides schools with requirements and recommendations for returning to school depending on which MI Safe Start Phase the region is in (currently Phase 4).

- Phases 1-3-Schools are closed for in-person instruction
- Phase 4-In-person instruction is permitted with required safety protocols
- Phase 5-In-person instruction with minimal safety protocols

Schools are required to develop plans for each of these three phases which must be approved by the Board of Education by August 17, 2020. Superintendents have agreed to work cooperatively, and in consultation with county health department officials, to develop common plans. Those plans will include in-person instruction, a hybrid model, and virtual learning options.

Meridian Public Schools will do everything in our power to return to in-person instruction in the fall with appropriate safety protocols. We know that this is the best option for learning. After what this community has endured, we know that our students need to return to school and have a sense of normalcy. They need to be surrounded by the familiar faces of their classmates and teachers. We know that many of our children are still suffering from trauma as a result of our community tragedy. School and normalcy is more important than ever for these children.

We will also be offering a hybrid model in the event that we move between phases or are required to close due to illness or other issues that are outside of our control. The hybrid model will be similar to what occurred this spring. This will allow us the best return to in-person instruction with the least amount of interruption.

Aware. Eligible. Prepared.

The last option that we will be offering is a virtual learning option. This will be a K-12 available to all children. We will be hosting a virtual webinar on August 4, 2020, for those who are interested in learning more about this option. The registration link is: <https://tinyurl.com/merpsvirtual>

There is still a lot of work and planning that will occur over the next few weeks, so more detailed information will be coming. Please know that many of the choices will not be within the control of local schools and both public and private schools within each region will be required to follow the Return to School Roadmap. Educating our children will bring us new challenges in the upcoming months, but the Meridian staff will ensure that learning and safety are always the priorities.

Sincerely,

Craig D. Carmoney