



September 30, 2020

Dear students, staff, families and community,

I hope you all are enjoying this beautiful fall weather as we transition to October. Thanks to all of you for your support to students and teachers to make the best of remote learning. I would also like to give a shout out to all Mount Baker staff who are making positive connections with students every day. The following comment from a student last week communicates the importance of these connections, especially in virtual classrooms:

*"I saw kids being nice to each other and being happy to see each other, and all of the teachers are really nice."*

Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> is an important attendance date. It is important that we have accurate counts that day, so please communicate any absences with secretaries. We appreciate your communication. Our office staff are here to support you, so please reach out if you are experiencing any difficulties.

It is vital that students take care of their technology devices. If a device is not working, please call our technology department at 360-383-2020. They can help problem solve and determine if you need to get a new device. We have received back some Chromebooks that have been misused and abused. We expect students to appropriately care for their devices and demonstrate responsible digital citizenship when using a District issued Chromebook or hotspot.

The YMCA School Age Care started Monday. If you are interested in registering your children, please visit our website for online registration <http://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/>. This month our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant Boys and Girls Club after school program will resume on a smaller scale than normal on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at Kendall Elementary. We are also working with some Community Based Organizations to work with sixth graders. This program will be once a week starting at Kendall with the vision of expanding to other schools in the future.

Many of you want to know why Mount Baker students are not back in our schools yet. While we have seen a recent rise in COVID-19 cases, we are in the low moderate range according to the Washington State Department of Health Decision Tree for Provision of In Person Learning. The answer is that we are slowly phasing in groups of students which is the continued guidance from OSPI and the Whatcom County Health Department. We have been cautioned to not go too fast, so we can continue moving forward without increasing the cases of COVID-19 which could overwhelm our county. Currently, we are phasing in some Career Technical Education, preschool and elementary special education programs,

and School Aged Care during the school day. In addition, we have some after school activities involving off season athletics that meets all health and safety guidelines.

In the next couple of weeks, I will share our complete phasing plan to help you understand how and when more groups of students will be brought back to school at least on a part-time basis. As we finalize these plans, it is important to do a perception check with our families. I am requesting your assistance by completing a survey that will ask you to identify the grade levels of your children. By grade level bands, you will be asked to identify your preference for either full remote learning, full remote learning that will transition into hybrid learning at a natural break in the school year, or hybrid learning as soon as possible. The definition of hybrid learning is a mix of in person instruction at school with remote learning. The reason full time in person learning is not listed is because we do not have that capacity at this time. If all students were back to school at the same time, we would not be able to follow the safety guidelines for social distancing. Please complete this brief survey after carefully reading the instructions, so you only answer the questions that pertain to your family. You will also have the opportunity to comment. <https://forms.gle/hTpzHPpNybCf376N8>

Thanks again for all you do to support our school community. Please call 360-617-4600 or email me at [msewright@mtbaker.wednet.edu](mailto:msewright@mtbaker.wednet.edu), if you would like to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Mary Sewright, Superintendent