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October 7, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

In an effort to keep up with the ever-changing face of this school year, we are constantly re-thinking our current and future plans for students. Recently, we asked you as parents to complete a form to inform us of your choice of instructional methods for your children during next quarter/trimester. We have compiled this information, and collected a great deal of input from staff members and have come to a new, amended "Phase 3" of our Return to Learn Plan.

There are two main changes for pre-K through 8th grade students (high school info to follow). First, Phase 3 will begin on OCTOBER 26th. This is a change from our original date. **Keep in mind that Phase 2 (two-hour early release days) will still begin next week, October 13th.** Second, Phase 3 (which will presumably last until the end of the school year) will include a one-hour early out schedule on a regular basis. **All students, pre-K through 8th grade, will be dismissed one hour early beginning October 26th for (presumably) the rest of the school year.**

Our reasons for these changes are varied. First and foremost, we want to get those students who will be moving to in-person instruction back as soon as possible. We believe strongly that the best way for students to learn is at school, in front of a teacher. Our staff is doing an amazing job of keeping students safe, while providing them with the best instruction available.

Secondly, students and staff will be wearing masks all day long, and may not be able to get what some believe is an adequate number of breaks from this throughout the day. For both students and staff, this can be an uncomfortable and distracting situation.

In addition, teachers are experiencing an increased workload due to the change of instructional methods that must be used to accommodate our restrictions as well as a change of curriculum to make up for lost instruction in the spring. Some teachers are teaching students both in-person and remotely at the same time, and doing their best to provide quality instruction to both. This is a monumental task. In order to provide a highly valuable experience for all students, our teachers need additional time to plan, collaborate, and prepare.

For our high school students: The plan looks a little different. We have been particularly challenged at the high school level to find adequate space to socially distance students. With the number of students returning to in-person learning and a change of courses, we have to think "out of the box" to keep students in school every day.

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Again, we believe being in school in front of a teacher daily is the most beneficial experience we can offer. In order to achieve this, the following must take place:

1. High school students will be released **2 hours early** on a daily basis, **except for those students who will be enrolled in a "5th block" class** and those riding the bus.
2. A few courses will be moved to a 5th block. Fifth-block classes are band, choir, and the art courses that are offered in conjunction with those courses. This is due to the number of students enrolled in these courses, and the lack of space and personnel to accommodate these students in one period during the regular day. Any student currently enrolled in these courses will be required to stay in these courses through the remainder of the year.
3. Students who are scheduled to stay for 5th block on a given day may arrive at school for 2nd block in the morning (they do not need to be present for 1st block) on those days. If these students need transportation, they may still ride the bus as usual and will be accommodated with a study hall first block.
3. Buses will run on a **one-hour early** release schedule at the end of the day with the rest of the district. High school students who have alternate transportation may leave school two hours early if they are not enrolled in a 5th block class. If students are in need of bus transportation, they will be accommodated with a study hall until the buses arrive (approximately one hour after release). This gives 5th block students a chance to ride the bus as well, and keeps routes consistent throughout the district.

We realize this may be confusing to parents of high school students. To make it a bit easier....

Is your child enrolled in band and/or choir?

If no, he or she will be released TWO hours early daily.

If yes, he or she will be released ONE hour early on band/choir days. If also enrolled in an art course on opposite days of band or choir, he or she will be released ONE hour early on those days as well. On band/choir/art days he or she may show up for school one period late (in time for second block).

Does your child need bus transportation from school?

If no, they may leave as soon as their last class ends.

If yes, they may stay for study hall. If enrolled in band/choir, the buses will be here right after these courses end.

Thank you for your continued patience as we strive to offer our best to students in this unconventional time. We strongly believe the above plan is best for kids under the circumstances. If you are having a problem understanding the plan, please call your child's school for clarification.

Sincerely,



Paula Crane
Superintendent