



October 7, 2020

Dear students, staff, families and community,

Thanks to all of you who took the time to complete the reopening preference survey. Although the COVID-19 transmission rates and the Department of Health Decision Tree for Provision of In Person Learning are the main drivers of bringing students back to school, it is also important to know how students, parents, and staff members are feeling about the possibility of upcoming transitions to in person learning. We want everyone to feel safe and supported as we move forward. If you are interested you can view the [parent survey results](#) and the [staff survey results](#). As you can see people are all over the spectrum of wanting to stay completely remote to having students back in school full-time. It is important that as a community we consider everyone's views with compassion rather than judgement because ultimately, we want everyone to feel safe and comfortable with school reopening phases. Together we will get there!

Currently teachers and staff member representatives are working with administration to agree on and plan for phases aligned with the Decision Tree for Provision of In Person Learning. I hope to have a document ready to share next week and plan to follow that up with a community meeting to share information and answer questions. Currently we have some self-contained special education programs and some Career Technical Education classes meeting in person on a part-time basis. Our YMCA School Aged Care is also serving students district-wide at Harmony Elementary. This month our Boys and Girls Club after school program at Kendall Elementary will start part-time. A Caring for Children and Enrichment program in partnership with Community Based Organizations will begin on Fridays starting on October 23rd for some sixth-grade students at Kendall Elementary. This program will run for eight weeks. We hope to expand to other schools in the future.

Off season athletic training and practice for high school students is going well. Thanks to our Athletic Director, Coach Ron Lepper for all the planning he did with his staff to make this successful. New guidelines were just released from the WIAA that ease up restrictions for practices while still following health and safety guidelines. Thank you to all of our student athletes who have been following guidelines and doing a great job during practices. You can view the new WIAA guidelines for returning to athletics and activities at this link <https://wiaa.com/News.aspx?ID=1732&Mon=10&Yr=2020>.

Friday, October 9th is a Waiver Day which means there is no school for students. All staff members will be participating in professional learning about Culturally Responsive Practices. This is a very special and important learning opportunity that involves everyone that works for Mount Baker School District regardless of their role. Bus drivers, mechanics, secretaries, custodians, maintenance workers, child nutrition staff, para-educators, nurses, counselors, teachers, and administrators will work together to ensure we are creating a learning environment that is inclusive, safe, and welcoming to all students and families. This will launch on-going learning for this school year and beyond.

Please support our students and community by continuing to follow safety guidelines including social distancing and wearing masks. Recently there has been a rise in the COVID-19 cases in our County. We must remain diligent and all do our part to get kids back to school. I would also like to encourage everyone to get a flu shot to mitigate the upcoming flu season. We don't need one more problem to complicate things. Take care of yourselves and stay healthy!

It is so easy to get stressed out right now. I appreciate all of you for supporting our students and keeping them engaged in learning. During stressful times it is so easy to make judgements and become negative about the circumstances. We see too much lashing out at others through the media and social media. I remind myself daily about the importance of compassion, especially when I find myself slipping into judgement. It is my new goal to error on the side of positive.

Finally, I would like to give a shout out to Mount Baker's awesome principals! This is Principal Appreciation Month. I am truly thankful for this amazing group of leaders. I encourage you to send them a message of appreciation and support for all they do for children, staff, and families. Thank you, principals!!

Have a great week! Go Baker!

Sincerely,

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