



PARKLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Educating For Success, Inspiring Excellence.

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Dear Parkland Parents and Guardians,

My hope is that this message finds you and your family in good health. I'd like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts about the future and invite you to provide input via our [Parkland Parent Return to School Survey](#) regarding plans for the start of school in the Fall of 2020. We are in the initial stages of planning and your input is critical as we examine needs and concerns surrounding what is feasible to implement this fall. I request that you complete the [Parkland Parent Return to School Survey](#) by next Tuesday, June 9, 2020. It is best to complete a survey form for each of your children currently enrolled in Parkland Schools so we can provide data for specific instances or grade levels. To that end, we developed a short survey (13 questions) with the inclusion of open-ended questions. This will allow the District to acquire feedback about the e-Learning Program and instructional delivery options under consideration for the start of next school year if we cannot return to school in the fall for 100% face-to-face instruction as was the norm prior to the pandemic.

I am so proud of how Parkland pivoted to keep students connected, engaged in learning, and moving the needle forward in meeting the educational standards required to matriculate all students to the next grade level. This also required a tremendous amount of support from our parent community and I thank you for your efforts. Now our plans shift to the possibility of social distancing requirements this fall and we are contemplating density-lowering solutions to reduce building populations that would enable us to open schools safely. We have our work cut out for us, and we will rise to the challenge of providing the best educational program possible with the health, safety and welfare of students and staff at the forefront of our plans.

THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE

The future educational needs of our students are an extremely important consideration. ***e-Learning cannot replace students' experiences in a regular school environment.*** All stakeholders I have spoken with during this pandemic share how much they miss the daily interactions with students and colleagues that can only take place in a school setting. But as much as we want to be in-person come fall, we do not know what the future holds. What is most difficult about the pandemic has been the inability to plan or know how the virus will affect future public health guidance. One thing is certain: our primary focus remains the health and safety of our staff, students and community at large.

We are working diligently in developing an instructional framework in anticipation of returning to school this fall. The goal of this framework is to respond to the limitations presented by COVID-19. The academic plan to be used for the 2020-2021 school year must emphasize key priorities: health and

safety of the students, staff and the Parkland community; flexibility and the ability to expand/contract the schedule based upon conditions; and the ability to provide meaningful instruction while maintaining prescribed social distancing **to the greatest extent feasible**.

Getting back to school with 100% face-to-face learning is our preferred plan, however, we are also creating a blended scenario where we split up the population of students who report physically to school each day and participate in e-Learning the rest of the week. This model impacts every operation that we have in place and therefore takes extensive planning as we analyze various scenarios. As such, we will continue to communicate to families over the summer as more details come together and we receive guidance from health and government officials.

We recognize the important role our District shares with our community, not simply for the educational, social, nutritional and health benefits we provide to children, but also for workforce participation by parents. While maintaining safety remains our priority, we are also extremely sensitive to the impact our school delivery model may have on childcare needs.

I also want our community to know that we are continuing our efforts to improve and enhance our e-Learning Program. We learned so much over the last three months in delivering our educational model remotely. There were many things to celebrate and many accomplishments achieved by students, staff, administrators and parents. However, we want to take the best practices that were discovered and share them among our staff and take a deeper dive into what was successful. Teachers can build great relationships with new students this fall even if we are still in an e-Learning format. This summer, our teachers and other staff will continue with their professional development to improve our e-Learning instructional delivery model. **Our e-Learning option for the fall will be a more rigorous and engaging version of this spring's format, as developmentally appropriate.**

Parkland administrators are part of a county-wide task force that is discussing teaching and learning, transportation, special education, student services, nutrition and food services, technology, operations, facilities, safety, human resources, and communication. We will look at various scenarios to assess the feasibility of each in the areas of effectiveness, capacity, and sustainability. It will be essential for the region to work together to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment and in the community while still providing a high quality, comprehensive educational program.

As a community we must remain resolved in our determination, patience, empathy, flexibility and support in this time of uncertainty. We all share in a strong desire for our students and staff to feel comfortable and safe upon returning to the school environment.

As we close out this school year we extend best wishes to our students, staff, parents and community members for a safe and happy summer. And, of course, **Congratulations and Best Wishes to the Class of 2020!**

Thank you for your continued support,

Richard T. Sniscak, Superintendent of Schools