

From: Alan Addley <dps@darienps.org>
Subject: Message from the Superintendent of Schools

September 2, 2020

Dear Families,

On the eve of another school year, I trust this finds your family in good health and eagerly looking forward to the start of another school year. As you make final preparations for your child(ren) to return to school, know the District has taken precautions to ensure everyone's safety. The health and safety of our students and staff are our top priorities.

Understandably, this summer was focused on planning for the reopening of schools. The Reopening Plan reflects a collaborative effort to meet the requirements and guidance from the State while providing the safest, personalized and highest-quality educational experience possible. The staff has devoted countless hours of dedicated work to implement health and safety measures, as well as prepare curriculum and classrooms in order to open on time.

The opening of school is going to be very different but the classrooms will be filled with the same passion for teaching and learning. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You must do the things you think you cannot do." In true Darien tradition, the community and staff has risen to the enormous challenges presented by this pandemic health crisis.

The start of any school year is traditionally a special time filled with excitement and nervous anticipation but even more so this year for staff, families and our students. Coming back together as a school community is our first step together in this year's educational journey.

In partnership, we will navigate the days ahead. In doing so, I ask for your continued patience, support and understanding for the staff as they teach in this new and uncertain environment. It will not be perfect. The staff has had to learn new systems, technology and educational platforms in a very short amount of time. We will experience inevitable bumps in the road and new learning along the way. Implementation of health and safety practices will be monitored and adjusted if needed.

As the summer closes and the school doors open again, we are excited to welcome everyone back. During a recent professional development workshop, I was struck by the following Maya Angelo quote: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." That is what we will do this year!

Just a reminder for tomorrow, if you are driving your child to school, we appreciate your assistance and understanding in arriving to school as close to the start of school as possible. For physically distancing and cohorting purposes, the schools cannot provide supervision before school.

Finally, the District extends a special warm welcome to the new families and students joining our school community.

Sincerely,

Alan Addley, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools