July 12, 2020

Dear Members of the Blind Brook Community,

The Blind Brook school community, like others across the nation, faces significant challenges, not least of which concern the safe restart of our schools in response to the global coronavirus pandemic.

I have been entrusted to lead Blind Brook Schools through these unprecedented times, and I take this responsibility to heart. The purpose of my letter to the community is to convey the commitment of the Board and myself to the safety of students, faculty, and staff members across our community.

Prior to my official start one week ago, I began working with the Board and school administrators to develop a comprehensive framework to be shared with the community. Our aim is to clearly describe the form and function that our schools will take in the fall.

We are expecting the release of specific operating standards from the New York State Reopening Schools Task Force in the days ahead. This group of experts was formed by the Board of Regents and the Education Department.

Preparations in Blind Brook are well underway in anticipation of guidelines from the State. In addition to the ongoing work of the administrative team, the Board confers with its Medical Advisory Committee to inform our efforts to safely restart school and care for our students. We are studying science-based guidance documents, attending webinars, and working across boundaries to identify best practices.

We have divided the challenge of restarting school by anticipating three probable operating scenarios. Schools may be directed to partially reopen using a blend of online and in-person instruction. This scenario is likely and would require scheduling adaptations in order to provide for social distancing.

Our goal if given such direction would be to provide consistency for both students and their parents, assure quality learning experiences, and safeguard the social-emotional health of our students.

School administrators are concurrently preparing for other possibilities as well to include continuation of remote instruction or full reopening if required. They will be reaching out to teachers to further advise preparation efforts. I believe District plans can only be strengthened through cooperation.
After integrating guidance from the State and school stakeholders into our plans, we will seek additional community feedback through a survey instrument and discussions with our PTA partners. Your input will help us refine school restart plans. The goals are to make school both engaging and safe for our students and manageable for parents.

I recognize that uncertainty makes planning at home difficult. As much as I would like to provide greater clarity, I cannot at this time. I will however continue to communicate a sense of our progress at regular intervals to keep our students, parent partners, faculty, and staff members more comfortably informed.

Every challenge provides hidden opportunity. Successfully navigating the challenges of this pandemic offers to promote creative and intelligent innovation in our schools that can inspire us to revitalize traditional instruction and learning in compellingly relevant ways. Our ability to reimagine the potential of school during the crisis stands to resonate far beyond our initial response to the current challenge.

While there is much work ahead, I am confident in the unwavering commitment of the many capable individuals working together. I am proud to be a part of the Blind Brook community and look forward to meeting every person invested in continued success and advancement of this incredible school community.

Dr. Patrick Brimstein
Superintendent of Schools