



JAMESTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Mrs. Contessa Pelfrey, Superintendent

Mr. David Croy, Principal

August 27, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Congratulations! We have begun a new school year in an unprecedented way and have completed our first seven days of school with distance learning. I applaud you and your child for your incredible efforts, flexibility, and positive attitude in tackling this current reopening of school due to COVID-19 and the challenges it brings.

Your child's teacher has diligently been preparing, training, planning, and developing a distance learning model to adapt the beginning of the school year instruction. Devices have been distributed to all students who needed one. The District has been working with those families in need of internet access. The District has contracted with various companies to purchase and provide internet service options and hotspots. Curriculum and instruction these first few weeks will be filled with technology education, social emotional learning, and identifying learning loss due to school closure in March. The District has purchased several new digital curriculum programs that will allow your child to be assessed and will identify areas of academic need. This data will guide the teacher in direct live instruction, and the research based online instructional programs will allow for student independent practice to increase mastery and address learning loss, and will also provide you with reports so you may see how your child is progressing on a regular basis.

You may have heard that our county did not make the State Monitoring list as we were led to believe. This information has many families wondering if Jamestown School District will be holding in-person instruction on campus. It is true that school districts do have the option to begin to think about implementing in-person instruction in a hybrid model, and there are several schools that are starting that process or have made decisions to reopen in early September. However, this is a more complicated process than it seems. We are still in the middle of a pandemic and as we have always emphasized, the health and safety of our staff and students is the priority and still is the driving force for our District decisions. There are safety and liability concerns, masking and social distancing requirements which need to be securely in place, and the ability for the county to have the appropriate testing capacity which will be necessary when so many new groupings of students will be introduced.

It is our District's belief that it is still too soon to move into in-person learning. Our District and Governing Board made the decision to begin with distance learning and to reassess the health and safety concerns at the beginning of October, which is the end of the progress report period. This decision was made to give both staff and parents a set time period for planning and for a successful implementation of distance learning practices and for technology needs to become established. This is important because distance learning will not be going away in the hybrid model with small class size cohorts. With students in small cohorts, all students will continue to participate in distance learning three days a week. This next month will allow students, and those of you that are assisting them at home, to become comfortable and confident with this learning model and sets them up for success in the long run for the entire school year. Children need structure and schedules. It is our belief that if shifting so soon after the beginning the year from one model to the next happens, it will be confusing and frustrating for everyone. Many, many, parents and guardians have sacrificed by changing work schedules, establishing childcare options, and enlisting family members to assist

in this distance learning process, and we feel it is a disservice to those families to not stick to our original planned date. Finally, our amazing teaching staff has spent an incredible amount of time preparing for distance learning to provide your children with the best education possible in this format. We want our teachers and students to be successful in this model, and to do so there needs to be time to establish this process first, before moving to another process.

I do want to commend all of you for your partnership in education as we are seeing a 98% student attendance rate with many classes having a 100% daily attendance rate. This is due to your willingness and efforts in this process, even if it is challenging to say the least. And, for this I personally would like to thank you.

I realize this news may not be what some of you want to hear, but it is my hope that you believe that our District decisions are truly based on the health and safety of our staff and your children. It is our sincerest hope that over the next month, we will see our county COVID-19 case rate continue to decrease and that restrictions are lifted so that we can feel confident that we are not placing anyone in harm's way.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me at 209-984-4058 ext. 3154 or cpelfrey@jespanthers.org for any questions or for further discussion.

I wish you all continued health and safety.

Sincerely,



Contessa Pelfrey