

September 4, 2020

MMS Families,

As we wrap up our first week of school I wanted to touch base on a handful of things. First and foremost, I wanted to laud our students and staff for their efforts this week. The parameters under which we have started have been new and challenging. However, our students have risen to the occasion and I am very proud of them. As we came into the year I was unsure how mask wearing would go and about managing distancing during less-structured times. Mask reminders are infrequent and taken care of quickly. Distancing, for adolescents is unnatural to many, so it will continue to be a work in progress. Our staff has done an admirable job reinforcing this with our students.

There are a handful of things that have been instilled in our students from their first days of school many years ago that are on hold. It is great that our students want to share with each other and be helpful (picking up dropped items, etc.). It makes me happy to see this. However, in the current climate they are forced to go the unnatural route of backing off and not assisting. I am hopeful that we don't lose this community feel when things bounce back.

For our **remote learners**, please be patient and continue to reach out when there are issues that we can address. This is a new dynamic for our teachers, and they are learning more each and every day. There are transitions that occur in the building between classes, so please be patient as teachers will start the Google Meets sessions when they have completed their transitions.

One frequent question we have received is about **Picture Day** for our remote students. Picture Day is currently scheduled for October 16th. On this day, we will set up a time for remote students to come in to have their school pictures taken. We'll set this up as it gets closer.

Yesterday, Mr. Gartley sent out a communication regarding our **cleaning products** here in RSU #18. It has been a frustrating learning curve as we work to get it right. We have some changing protocols in hopes of balancing sanitizing/cleaning and keeping our students and staff safe.

The after and before school **vehicle traffic** is something that we are keeping an eye on. It's been a perfect storm as we've asked more of you to transport your children and the access road to MHS has been *inaccessible* due to construction. One thing to consider, if it works for your family, is to come a little later after school. Your son/daughter can access the cafeteria starting at 2:45pm and wait there until you arrive (by 5pm). If you arrive in the 2:55pm-3pm range the traffic should have subsided. Again, this is something we are keeping an eye on at the moment.

Overall, it's been a solid start and we're continuing to check and adjust on a daily basis. I thank you for your patience, understanding, and the words of encouragement we have received. This is a great community and we'll continue to navigate all of this together. Please enjoy the well-deserved long weekend. It's been a long week, and we have learned a lot to take with us into next week and beyond.

Sincerely,
Sam