

Dear Merrimack Families~

As we all settle into this strange new routine, I'd like to provide just a brief update tonight on what that routine is beginning to look like in the Merrimack School District.

On Monday, the district food service staff provided a total of 247 lunches to our families. Of that number, 85 were home delivered and 162 were picked up at our high school location. Today, the district provided 226 lunches to our families, of which 96 were home delivered and 130 were picked up at Merrimack High School. With thanks to our maintenance crew for ensuring that pick up locations were cleared of any snow, we were able to maintain our services in this new normal.

Toward that end, the district continued to respond to school community needs with regard to distributing Chromebooks and iPads and schools are completing their final distribution of work packets to families. This new normal is seeing the establishment of new routines-teachers and students interacting differently, but in so many instances in all our schools interacting creatively and productively. Learning is still happening, and teachers and students are figuring out how to partner in new and meaningful ways. Teachers, too, are interacting and planning with each other in ways that would have been almost impossible not that many years ago thanks to our technology tools and the efficient way they have been acquired and managed by our technology team.

Each of our school administrators today continued to learn what it is to manage a mobile and remotely located staff. Their enormous skills are being tested in new and unfamiliar ways, and they are proving themselves worthy of this new challenge. It is more evident every day just how central our schools are to the lives of our students, their parents and our staff. Without the safety and comfort afforded by gathering in the home school to engage in the normal routines of learning and socializing, administrators are finding themselves having to maintain virtual cultures to demonstrate that, even at a distance, the ties that bind school community members to each other are strong. We are fortunate that in Merrimack our school communities were already strong; they are demonstrating it now every day and thanks to our administrative team these cultures will remain strong throughout this very tough time.

Our educators and office staff, whether working remotely or on site, have never been trained for teaching or working in such an environment. And yet they are doing it, every day. And each day that passes where they continue to redefine what the business of schooling looks like under such unusual circumstances, and with so much at stake, I must thank them for proving just how worthy they are of our trust and respect.

Finally, as we settle into this strange new routine, I would like to remind all of our students, and their families, how much we miss them and how much we look forward to being back to normal with all of you. I, for one, am certainly more appreciative now than ever of all the things I might have taken for granted before and I look forward to returning to, and appreciating, all those things just as soon as possible.

Stay well.

Mark McLaughlin
Superintendent