

Dear Merrimack Families~

Welcome to the end of our first week of remote learning. The end of the week brought with it a number of impactful developments relative to the current health emergency and the various responses to it, and none more so than the governor's stay at home and related orders issued yesterday. Today, as you can imagine, there has been an enormous amount of work to assess impacts of these orders on our school and district operations. Additionally, we have been working closely with NH DHHS to assess the progress of COVID-19 in our state. In the present situation multiple factors have to be considered as different pieces of the same important puzzle and must be taken into account when decisions are made about anything affecting our students, our staff and our community. Simply extraordinary times.

As you know, the governor reaffirmed that school personnel are essential employees and that the operations of remote learning must continue at least through May 4th. This has significant implications on a staggering number of things facing schools across the state. As this first week comes to an end I ask for your continued patience as we come to terms with the implications of what is happening to all of us right now. Clearly we have entered an era in which questions will come a lot faster than answers and patience will soon become the greatest virtue. I am truly grateful for the patience and understanding that so many of you have shown to all of us as we work to support your students through this extraordinary challenge.

Next week we will continue to share whatever answers we have as we methodically address what lies before us. You can continue to look to district and school based websites as your best source of information about how we're going to proceed over the coming weeks and, quite possibly, longer. For now, however, please know this: The academic and social emotional well being of the students of our district lies at the very heart of every decision we will make going forward. Right now, the decisions that must be made in the coming days and weeks will all be geared toward ensuring that your students, our students, will be as well prepared to move on from this as we can make them given the current conditions. This crisis will pass when it does I am sure that we will all emerge from it with a greater sense of appreciation for our collective strength and resilience. I am acutely aware that our students are watching us all right now, looking for guidance and assurances that things will be ok. While it is important not to promise more than any of us can deliver at the moment, it is essential that we show them that all the adults in their lives are confidently and as calmly as possible working through everything it will take to keep them well and prepare them as best we can for life after this. And we will.

Rest and stay well.

Mark McLaughlin
Superintendent