

Dear Merrimack Families and Staff~

Welcome to the first day of the seventh week of remote learning in our school district. It hardly seems possible. So much has happened in that time that has affected us all personally and professionally, all of it new and much of it hard. However, the impact of this crisis on our students, from preschool all the way to the class of 2020, is what has occupied the school district and all its staff from our first day of remote learning to this very minute.

Today would have been our first day of April vacation. I am sure that many of you are disappointed by canceled travel plans, missed opportunities to connect with family and friends, and simple moments of rest and diversion from your busy lives. However, as a result of this emergency, and our community's decision resulting from it, this is another week of making the best out of the worst, focusing on doing what we can as well as we can to prevent this situation from taking more away from us than it already has. And so we work this week, hard and diligently, all of us, and in so doing bring summer that much closer to us than it might otherwise have been.

This will be another week of planning and decision making about everything from high school graduation to summer school, from closing out this year and preparing for the next. We will work hard to communicate those plans and decisions when they are ready to share in the hopes that in doing so the uncertainty that has characterized these last seven weeks will continue to be at least somewhat alleviated. In the meantime, there is much to be accomplished in the school year that remains, and we pledge, as we have done since remote learning began, to do our best to serve the educational needs of our students given the current conditions and all the limitations they impose on all of us, students, families and educators. Over these past many weeks I have come to believe more than ever that what happens to us defines us far less than how we respond to what happens to us. I see daily evidence, among teachers, students and families, of the powerful ways our collective responses to this astounding situation have revealed the strength, character, determination, creativity, patience and grace that defines this community. That is more powerful than this virus, and will continue to define us long after it is gone.

I wish you all a good and safe week ahead.

Stay well.

Mark McLaughlin
Superintendent