

Dear Merrimack Families and District Staff~

Tonight's message is all about gratitude and acknowledging those in our school and town community who are working and trying so hard every day to help us all make the best and the most of this very difficult time.

First, in recognition of the fact that today is **National Nurses' Day**, I would like to offer a huge thank you to our fantastic school nurses who work so hard every day, pandemic or not, to ensure your children, our students, are safe, healthy and well cared for while they are in our care, and often, supporting them past the school day as well. I am sure you join me in sending a huge thank you to the following fantastic, resourceful, caring and immensely talented school nurses:

MHS	MMS	JMUES	MES	RFS	TFS
Karen Hammes Pattie Chouinard	Stephanie Davenport	Joanne Talbot	Michelle Webster	Kelly Grassini	Jackie McMahon

These medical professionals are our heroes every day—and we are grateful for their dedication to the health and well being of all our students.

This week, May 4th to May 8th, is also recognized as **Teacher Appreciation Week**. Like all school district staff, our teachers engage in immensely challenging, always changing, and highly complicated work every day. They manage curriculum and instructional implementation, recognize the differentiated needs of students, adjust to changing standards, assess for understanding AND accommodate to the ever changing environment of state and federal testing mandates. They manage student behaviors, reassure student anxieties, address parent concerns, grow professionally throughout the year and almost always, for many, throughout the summer as well. Teachers manage conflict, provide fun, support creativity, teach time management and, in so doing, prepare students the best they can for the next part of their journey, whether that's the next grade, the next school, college, a trade, or wherever their aspirations take them. To be sure, this is their job. To be sure, we don't always get it right. To be sure, we can always improve. But public school teachers are every day heroes, in the midst of a pandemic or just regular life, because the care and nurturing of students, their job, is about as important a job as there is, and because they work so hard to honor the immense responsibility that comes with it. I am sure you join me in sending a huge thank you to our dedicated and exceptional teachers.

I would also like to thank the many, many members of our school district and town community for responding so quickly to requests for help in light of the recent challenges affecting our school lunch program. As a result, we are able to resume our remote lunch program tomorrow and will continue to do so in this way until we are able to continue normal operations. Your generosity is noticed, appreciated, and another excellent example of the strength of the Merrimack community. Thank you to everyone for reaching out with offers of help and support. We are truly grateful.

Finally, I'd like to make special note of our bus company, Student Transportation of America (STA) and Michelle Bancroft, who have gone above and beyond in providing the means for our district to "go remote" so quickly and with such efficiency. STA has worked closely with the school district to support the distribution of school materials for students and food to those in need. Michelle Bancroft, in particular, has worked closely with families throughout this difficult time and most recently as we have worked to adapt to the latest challenge. She is one of the many members of our larger school district

community and associated partners who are helping us to get through this time with care, compassion and with as much efficiency as conditions allow. Thank you Michelle, and STA for all you do to support the Merrimack School District.

There is much to be grateful for in spite of these tough times. I appreciate the opportunity this week, in particular, provides to acknowledge so much of it.

Stay well.

Mark McLaughlin
Superintendent