

Dear Merrimack Families and District Staff~

I hope this finds you all well and rested after a beautiful New Hampshire Memorial Day weekend. We are in the final countdown now—three more school days to go. Tonight, I share with you some of the fantastic work done by JMUES Student Council members as part of their Community Service Project. Under the excellent direction of Mrs. Monroe and Mrs. Wagner these outstanding students are demonstrating what being a grateful community member looks like. We could not be more proud of their efforts and the way they are uplifting our community with their messages of support for all the ways that so many community partners have gone above and beyond to take care of us during these difficult times. Thank you, students, for reminding us of the importance of gratitude and hard work, more important now than ever before. We are grateful for *you*!

Also tonight I want to continue to share considerations currently under review relative to the conditions under which school will be able to reopen in some form this fall. While it may seem strange to discuss these things when we are not yet finished with this school year, the fact is that there is much work to be done in order to be well prepared for school in the fall and now is the time to engage in those preparations. Much more will be shared at next week's school board meeting, but it is important now to state unequivocally that student and staff safety will be the single most important consideration when determining appropriateness for school opening, in some form, this fall. While our state and country are in the midst of modified re-openings of businesses and other establishments, few entities have the unique qualities that a school district must contend with as part of its natural day to day operations—bringing nearly 4000 students and almost 800 staff back to our schools, which is just one normal business day for us, brings with it a host of issues and concerns that must be addressed in the context of the current crisis. A few months will likely not change much in terms of the underlying challenges that schools must face as a normal part of their daily operations. But we shall see. In the meantime, we must develop dual or triple plans for a variety of outcomes that only time will reveal.

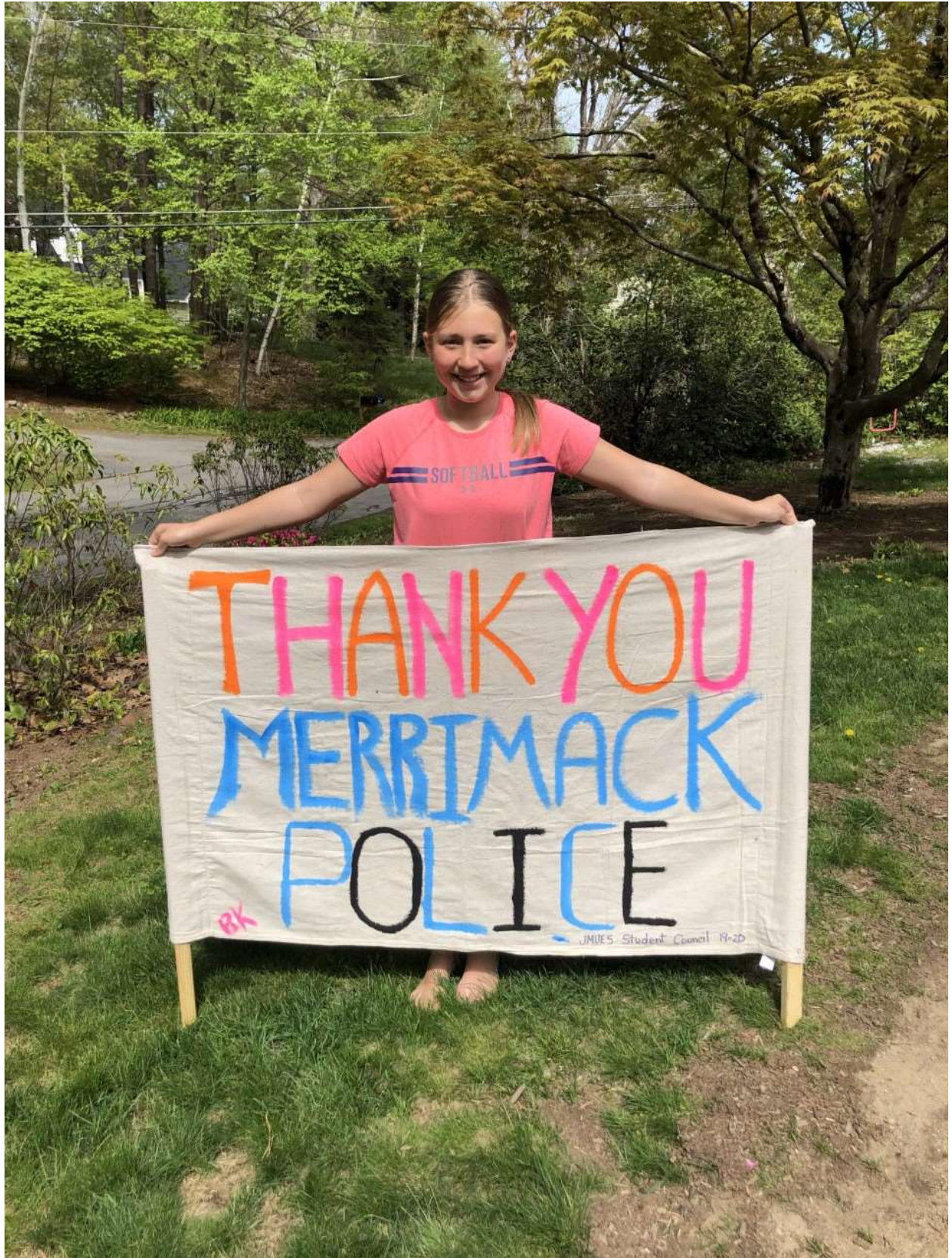
Our district desperately wants to have its students back in the fall, and we will work hard to do so mindful of the necessary precautions we must take in order to address our most vital responsibility-the health and safety of our students and staff. I am most hopeful that we will be able to meet and overcome these challenges as we have so far, but it will take good planning, the cooperation and understanding of all stakeholder groups, and a lot of patience. We will continue to provide updated details about this planning in the days and weeks to come. But for tonight, it is important to let you all know that planning is indeed underway, and it will be guided by the demands of our most important responsibility.

Stay well.

Mark McLaughlin  
Superintendent







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JMUES Student Council 19-20





















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