

In order to address some of the questions you may have regarding what our schools will be like in the fall, I am providing a few details of our thought process at this time. While our number one focus is on finishing this school year as strongly as we can, we also have our eyes and plans on returning to school in the fall. Therefore, I am sharing our thoughts, questions that are being posed, and advanced planning to update you.

In anticipation of next year's reopening, we are poring over content, planning and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS), Allegan County Health Department (ACHD), and other state plans and professional association guidelines for returning to school. The governor recently announced the creation of a *Return to Learning Advisory Council* and the Michigan Department of Education is leading workgroups to advise that council. I do not anticipate this council will have recommendations in place until at least July.

We are conscious of the fact that there could be further interruptions experienced during the 2020-21 school year due to a resurgence of COVID-19. We are also aware that many in our community may simply refuse to send their children to school for a variety of reasons. Generally, we are anticipating three prongs as we return to school:

1. In-Person Schooling - with health safeguards.
 - a. The Governor's *Return to Learning Advisory Council* will be providing guidance and recommendations.
2. Hybrid Approach - some in-person schooling and some remote learning.
3. Remote Learning - taking what worked in our Continuity of Learning Plans, what we learned from this process, and input from surveys to refine and improve.

We know that the quality of learning for students during this crisis has not been equal to in-person learning. We are working to make sure that we use the reflective observation and input of our teachers, administrators, and community to improve our in-person schooling, our health focus, and our remote learning in order to offer the best and most impactful instruction possible. I am deeply grateful to our teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents for the extraordinary effort demonstrated during this unprecedented public health crisis that has caused a complete and total change to the educational process.

Some questions we are working through in order to prepare for school year 2020-2021:

- As information continues to evolve, is it reasonable for our schools to be safely open as normal? What are health and safety protocols that need to be instituted?
- What modifications should be made to safely open our schools and is it possible for our schools to make those modifications? We don't want to make false promises. We are eager to open but safety and health are #1 priorities and considerations.
- What can be different about our attendance policies to ensure that students and staff can act in the best interest of their health and the health of others? We are mindful of the wide breadth of this pandemic and its continued impact on members of our staff, students, families, and our community.
- How should we modify our "return to work/school" protocols?
- What do we do with students that do not feel safe in returning to school?

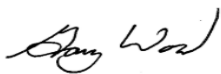
- How do we determine if learning loss has occurred for some of our students?
- How will custodial protocols change to meet current best practice?
- If the State does not allow us to begin the school year in person, what does returning to school actually look like?

Again, we know that the past few months have been challenging. Our students, staff, and families continue to be in our thoughts as we collectively experience this pandemic. We are stronger when we work together and appreciate the support, care, and attention that our staff and you have provided our students during this difficult time.

There are still unknowns about the Coronavirus that cannot be fully anticipated at this time. We will continue to adapt any plans for fall based on guidance from health and education officials as it becomes available, and provide you with updates on our planning as soon as we have them.

Thank you for your partnership. We are here to support you as we continue this journey together, and we are thinking about you, your families, and your well-being each day.

Yours in Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Wood".

Gary Wood
Hopkins Public Schools Superintendent