



October 29, 2020

Team Kenton to include our extended family,

I want to extend a very special thank you to everyone for your continued outstanding efforts enabling us to provide the very best education possible for our kids during this pandemic. Team Kenton has simply been amazing and we thank you for your continued flexibility, professionalism, commitment to growth, incredible work ethic and commitment to our team. Additionally, to our outstanding KIDS, your resiliency and efforts are amazing and to our parents/guardians and extended community, thank you for your continued patience and support as we continue to navigate this COVID-19 situation.

Team, we have made great progress during a very difficult situation moving from NTI last spring to NTI (synchronous learning) when school started to now an A/B rotational model with an option for full time synchronous or full time virtual learning. While we know that there is no replacement for in-person learning, reports and data indicate that we are having success for our kids during this difficult situation. I share this based on reports from staff, personal visits and conversations in schools, feedback from our student advisory group, feedback from parents/guardians and our outstanding participation rate of 96.80% since the beginning of school. While we continue to have success, we understand the need to have our kids who chose in-person learning in school daily. As a result, our team has been working with schools to update our district guidance document and for each school to update their school plans to have all kids return to in-person learning who chose that model. Unfortunately, during this work we have had the most significant increase in cases in our county as our current rate of 23.8 cases per 100,000 is very close to the “critical phase” on the state public health dashboard. Reminder, if we reach the “critical phase”, instead of closing all schools and stopping all programs, we will implement our testing program for those who did not opt-out to determine if we have spread in our individual schools. We will then make decisions for individual schools and programs based on our district dashboard.

While we know we are experiencing an increase in cases in our region and county it is important that we have a goal to return our kids who chose in-person learning to school daily five days a week. I have made a recommendation to our board to establish January 4<sup>th</sup> as our goal to bring our kids back to in-person learning daily. Additionally, I am asking them to authorize me, as the superintendent, to bring our kids back earlier if the data is trending in the right direction or to delay the January 4<sup>th</sup> date if we are continuing to see escalation in cases. I am making this recommendation due to continued deep concerns for our students’ academic achievement and social and emotional well-being. Once again, we all understand the need to get our kids in schools daily. Also, we understand that our staff, students and parents/guardians are very passionate, with very good reasons, about this topic with everyone having strong beliefs on both sides of the issue of returning to in-person learning. We appreciate the varied perspectives, however, please know that safety is and will always be our #1 priority.

Team, we want everyone to know that every decision we have made and will make regarding our response to this pandemic will be measured, thoughtful, data driven and in consultation with local public health officials to ensure we mitigate risk as much as possible for our students, staff, families and our community.

We appreciate everyone’s continued patience and support as we continue to navigate this global pandemic. We will get through this together as TEAM KENTON is strong!

Sincerely,

Henry Webb, Ed.D

Kenton County Board of Education

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