



Dear Parents & Caregivers,

On August 4, 2020 the School District of Wisconsin Dells held commencement for the Class of 2020, and this signified the last official event at the “old WDHS.” The weather was picturesque, and it was so good to once again see the graduates, their parents and other family members and friends of this class. A very special thank you to Mr. Gaston, Mrs. Hoch and Senior Class Advisor Troy Ryan for ensuring such a nice ceremony, given the challenges of being able to conduct an in-person graduation ceremony. As I stated as part of my welcoming address, I cannot think of a more fitting group of seniors to close out the end of an era, and I would like to wish the very best for the graduates of the Class of 2020. The world is yours! Go get it!

The District is about to begin the 2020-21 school year. There is no doubt this year presents the most challenges ever, and everyone will need to exercise their greatest cooperation, flexibility, and patience for this to be a successful school year. As many of you may know, the District is offering two options for students and families as they consider their back-to-school options. One is the more traditional option of attending school in-person each day, and the second is to attend remotely and take advantage of virtual learning options. As part of a district-wide commitment survey, parents and caregivers indicated on roughly a 75% in-person and 25% remote virtual basis. The District is pleased to offer these two options moving into the upcoming school year. There will undoubtedly be challenges and changes in protocols in the day-to-day operations of schools, as well as there may be some mandated interruptions or pauses to the school year. Flexibility and patience will be paramount throughout the entire school year and with that said, there will be some adjustments to the start of the school year for those students appearing in person. Building principals have prepared their back-to-school plans, and those plans can be found on each school’s homepage on our website. We want to begin the new school year at roughly 50% student capacity to be able to teach the new necessary procedures and protocols to keep everyone safe. The goal is to ramp up to what will be full capacity by Monday, September 14, 2020.

Typically, I recognize the efforts of our custodians and maintenance staff, as their traditional summer cleaning and maintenance routines are always appreciated. This year it’s evident they have put forth a herculean effort converting Spring Hill to a stand-alone elementary school, now with a grade configuration of PK-5, converted the old high school to Wisconsin Dells Middle School, now serving grades 6-8, and of course making the long-anticipated move into the new WDHS, now returning to serve students in grades 9-12. As part of our strategic plan, one of our objectives is to implement a long-term plan that ensures clean, healthy and safe facilities to foster student learning. This year it will be paramount that we meet this objective. There will be additional cleaning procedures and operations in place to control any spread of Covid-19. The District is fortunate to have a custodial and maintenance staff that meets the aforementioned objective, and on behalf of the District I wish to thank every custodian and maintenance staff worker for their respective efforts. Listed below is a summary list of these staff members as well as some employees who assist with summer cleaning duties.

Clayton Berka	Jeff Powell
Scott Georgeson	Bill Roeker
Joan Giebel	Filiberto Sandoval
Jim Hacker	Jeff Sanford
Greg Huber	Cathy Steele
Tom Klapoetke	Terry Sullivan
Lee Murray	Christian Torres
Jason Musiedlak	Scott Walsh
Dick Novinska	Dan Wendt
Joyce Paradies	

With the start of the new school year, one item that always begins with a few challenges is student transportation. Director of Transportation Fred Steinhorst has been busy adjusting routes to the new configuration of schools as well as readying for the new school year with a series of new procedures for students riding the buses. There will be significant changes in cleaning protocols with disinfecting the buses after the conclusion of each route. Additionally, each bus is outfitted with a hand sanitizer station at the entry of the bus to allow students to clean their hands upon entry and exit of the buses. Additionally, to accommodate distancing measures, siblings will be seated with each other as opposed to the what has been the previous practice of graduate seating with our youngest learners seated up front and older students in the back of the bus. Finally, the District appreciates the response it received from survey data indicating a much higher number of families will provide their own transportation, as this will allow buses to operate at roughly 50% capacity and in most cases offer every other row seating.

As I typically do a couple of times a school year, I will mention the District’s continued work with its strategic plan. As we approach the 2020-21 school year, our goal is to live our mission statement of ***Connect, Inspire, Achieve, Everyone, Every day!*** These words will continue to be a part of our focus as staff and students return for the new school year. Since developing the multi-year strategic plan in June of 2016 and renewing in March of 2020, our district has become much more focused on making continuous improvement in four core strategies and strategic objectives. Progress has been made in a variety of areas, and we know there is much work and opportunity for improvement that lies ahead, but it is reaffirming to see the District’s focus improve because of constructing this plan several years ago. As a reminder, the strategic objectives consist of the following:

- **Student Growth and Achievement:** Use data-driven, culturally responsive instruction to improve K-12 literacy and to ready learners for colleges and careers.
  - As previously mentioned, a new 4K—2 reading program was implemented in 2018-19 and a new reading program for grades 3-5 will be implemented at the start of the upcoming school year.
  - All students 4K-12 will write on a regular basis and in nearly all subject areas.

- **Professional Growth and Leadership:** Enhance student learning and retain top talent by supporting creative implementation of high-impact instructional strategies and targeted professional development.
  - As previously mentioned, during the summer months as well as the upcoming school year, the District will offer countless professional development opportunities to teaching staff and administrators to continue their professional learning.
  - The District continues to “double down” by investing in high-impact professional development strategies for literacy and math.
  
- **District and Community Engagement:** Connect with the community to promote our district and best serve our students and families.
  - Administrators, teaching staff and support staff will continue to share positive note cards with students and families highlighting the good work our students are doing in our schools. Typically, the District sends about 10,000 positive messages home each school year!
  
- **Facilities, Finance, and Operations:** Implement a long-term plan that ensures safe, clean, and healthy facilities that foster multiple student learning pathways while maintaining fiscal responsibility.
  - With the start of the 2020-21 school year, the District is much better positioned to have significantly more space at Spring Hill, WDMS and the new WDHS. Lake Delton Elementary is our lone school that now experiences space challenges. However, as some families have opted for some remote learning, this may take a bit of pressure off this building.
  - The Board continues to look at developing a goal as well as a way to offset 50% of the electrical utility costs of the District by implementing more solar panel arrays on existing rooftops. Later this fall the District will resume discussion on this topic.

Know that we are excited, albeit with some heightened anxiety to ensure we are well prepared to begin what is going to be a busy, challenging, exciting, and successful 2020-21 school year! Thank you for your flexibility and patience as we begin this new school year.

*Terrance R. Slack*