

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

CASS SCHOOL DISTRICT 63

8502 Bailey Road • Darien, Illinois 60561-5333
331-481-4000 • Fax 331-481-4001 • mcross@casd63.org

Mark R. Cross

Superintendent of Schools



Friday, July 17, 2020

Re: Return to Learn Progress and Next Steps

Dear Cass School District 63 Parents,

First of all, I cannot thank you enough for the incredible response to the Return to Learn Parent Survey that was sent out on July 8. We had an overwhelming response not only in terms of quantity, but also quality. We knew the data would be insightful, but even more useful in our planning were the many constructive comments and suggestions. The leadership team, teachers, staff, Return to Learn Committee and Board of Education are beyond grateful for your responses. We all believe that our plans will be better as a result.

With the survey deadline just this past Monday and countless other factors to consider in this constantly evolving situation, we have been working nonstop on our plans. In addition to the parent survey results, we have held key meetings with staff and teacher leaders this week, as well as our Return to Learn Committee who advises and provides feedback. These dedicated people have also had a huge amount of input into safely and responsibly returning to school.

I refer to it as "reimagining school" because that is exactly what we are doing. Not only the obvious piece of delivering high quality instruction, but how we travel on the bus, how we drop off kids, how we do lunch and how we walk down the hallway. Every single aspect of school is something that needs to be rethought. And we are going to do this the right way, because the greatest value that will never be compromised is ensuring the health and safety of our children and our staff. Regardless of any other consideration, that will always come first.

With that in mind, we have a little more work to do before we release our plans, but it is our intention to do just that no later than Wednesday, July 22. *Reimagining School: The Cass 63 Return to Learn Framework* will include the critical details that you need to know. This will include the schedule, calendar, policies and procedures. It will explain what we will be able to offer, as well as some things we cannot. One thing we know for certain is that is that when school opens in August, it will look different than it did last August, and very different than it did this past May. We need to educate and teach your children and move them forward academically, and yet do so with uncompromised safety for all.

No plan is going to be perfect, and not everything is going to be liked by everyone, including us. But rather than looking at this as reacting to something none of us like, we are taking a positive growth mindset toward reimagining school, giving our parents some choices and meeting our children's academic, social and

Concord Elementary School

Cass School District 63
1019 Concord Place • Darien, Illinois 60561-5124
331-481-4010 • Fax 331-481-4011 • landerson@casd63.org

Laura Anderson, Ed.D.

School Principal & District Director of Teaching & Learning

Cass Junior High School

Cass School District 63
8502 Bailey Road • Darien, Illinois 60561-5333
331-481-4020 • Fax 331-481-4021 • cmarcinkewicz@casd63.org

Mrs. Christine Marcinkewicz

School Principal & District Director of Technology

emotional needs wherever they are and at the very best of our ability. Again, we know that different school districts are taking different approaches and there is not a thing wrong with that. Every school and community is truly unique and our focus is on meeting the needs of our children and community in accordance with the guidance of the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Board of Education. Thank you for your patience and kindness. As we have said, it is more important to be thorough in our planning and communicating, rather than rush and be forced to make unforeseen changes.

On a personal note, I officially started just over two weeks ago as the superintendent of Cass School District 63. While working on something of this magnitude is not how I would prefer to start, it has actually made me appreciate even more what an amazing and dedicated staff we have, not to mention such a supportive community and Board of Education. I am truly blessed and honored to serve you in this role, and nothing will compromise our focus on our kids.

Thank you for your support of our children and our schools!

Sincerely,

Mark R. Cross

Mark R. Cross
Superintendent of Schools

MRC/glw