

August 4, 2020

Dear Families,

Thank you for your continued patience as we navigate unprecedented and challenging times during the COVID pandemic. I fully understand the challenges we collectively face and I am thankful for the grace and patience you have shown since our sudden and unexpected school closure in the spring.

I'm writing to share with you some important information about our start to the 2020-21 school year. As you may recall, our priority when we began our return to school planning efforts was to maximize in-person instruction for students as much as possible, while still following state and local Department of Health guidelines. For the past several weeks, district staff have worked hard to create learning options that ensure a high-quality education while maintaining safety and health for all. However, we have recently received a verbal directive from the Chelan Douglas Health District that the level of community spread of COVID-19 in the region is too high to be able to start schools in-person and health officials are recommending that we begin the year in a remote/distance learning model.

The Cashmere School District must follow state and local mandates related to health and safety. After extensive consultation with the Department of Health, Chelan County Health Officials and the district's insurance carrier, we have made the difficult decision to begin the 2020-21 school year in remote learning models – "Cashmere @ Home" and "Cashmere Online".

Please bear in mind that the "Cashmere @ Home" model will look drastically different from our overnight transition to online learning in the spring. Our staff worked incredibly hard to quickly deliver remote instruction virtually overnight and we learned a great deal this past spring. As a result, we are committed to serving our students with a significantly improved remote learning experience this fall. These improvements include enhanced technology/digital tools to allow for livestreaming of lessons, clear and consistent student schedules that help students better manage their coursework and connect with teachers, clarity in remote learning expectations which will include daily attendance/grading, and more consistent and frequent communication with students and families.

For families interested in an online, independent home-school learning experience, "Cashmere Online" provides this alternative, while still allowing students to maintain their status in the Cashmere School District. "Cashmere Online" students will interact with an online educator and education platform facilitated by Edgenuity, a leading provider of K-12 online curriculum.

Please know that our ultimate goal is to facilitate a safe return to the classroom for face-to-face instruction. District leaders and staff have worked hard to develop plans and protocols that support in-person education while maintaining the health and safety of all our students and staff. Once we receive permission to fully re-open, we are prepared do so quickly and in the safest manner possible. Please know that we continue to advocate for and explore how we can safely offer some form of in-person instruction for those students who have barriers to their ability to receive remote/distance instruction.

It is our pledge to keep families informed now and in the future. More information will be coming out from individual schools, including informational letters and parent meetings via zoom. In addition, it is our intention to conference with each family prior to the start of school.

Again, thank you for your patience and understanding during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Glenn Johnson
Superintendent
Cashmere School District