

Dr. Maureen A. Long
Superintendent of School's
Ext 101

Antonietta Schroeder
Principal
Ext 119

Kathy Cietek
District Treasurer
Ext 105

Cheri Vandenberg
Guidance Counselor
Ext 156

Meghan Amatrano
CSE Chairperson
Ext 155

Carin D'Ambro
School Nurse
Ext 109
Fax 434-2840

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Menands Union Free School District



19 Wards Lane, Menands, NY 12204

T (518) 465-4561 F (518)- 434-2840

www.menands.org

June 26, 2020

Dear Menands families:

As we have been finishing up the current school year, you should know that we have been working diligently to begin the thoughtful planning that will be required to imagine what re-opening could look like in the fall. I am certain you have many questions in this regard. I wanted to share with you the work we have done to date and how we will proceed, which will require insight and input from all constituent groups, and will certainly include our parents and families.

- The district administration has been participating in collaborative planning conversations with the 24 school districts that make up our Capital Region BOCES around the many facets of re-opening.
- We are reviewing the data and feedback from the statewide "Thought Exchange" that surveyed thinking around re-opening (I had shared the link to this in my May 21 communication).
- We have initiated internal conversations with our facilities staff relative to enhanced safety and cleaning protocols, as well as classroom and building set up to comply with recommended social distancing protocols.
- Initial conversations have begun with instructional staff, looking at a variety of scenarios under which we may return, and how that would impact how instruction is provided, as well as the social-emotional considerations that go along with a return.
- We have engaged in communication with both of our transportation contract providers, and discussed how we might transport students in consideration of the guidance and mandates currently in place.
- From each of these conversations, we have identified materials and supplies that will be necessary to insure safety, and for instruction, and have begun to acquire these items.
- Also from these conversations we have begun to identify and plan for needed training and professional development that will need to occur prior to the fall.

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It is important for you to know, no final decisions have been made about returning to school in the fall. Any decisions will be made with the necessary guidance and direction from local, state and federal departments of health, The NYS Department of Education, and the Governor's office. As we await that guidance, however, we must continue to move forward with our planning, in anticipation of reduced capacity in classrooms to comply with current social distancing/health and safety guidelines.

Working from the earlier referenced "Thought Exchange" we will be developing and disseminating our own survey that is more specific to the unique needs and attributes of our school. We will also be asking for parents who may wish to participate in future conversations to let us know. If you have a desire to do so, please send an email to Sue McCormick, smccormick@menands.org, by July 6, include your name, your child's name(s) and grade(s), and along with being a parent, any relevant and pertinent experience that you may have that you can bring to the discussion. Based on the responses we will proceed accordingly.

At present, there remains far more questions than answers. We will continue to keep you informed as our planning discussions continue. Please feel free to contact me via email: mlong@menands.org, or via phone (518) 465-4561 ext. 101.

Sincerely,



Dr. Maureen A. Long
Superintendent