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July 17, 2020

Dear Menands families,

Per my message from July 10, as expected, we received more information and guidance this week relative to school reopening in New York State.

From the Governor's Office, we learned the metrics that will be used to determine if schools will reopen, as well as those that will determine if they can remain open. If a school is located in a region in phase IV of reopening, and has a daily infection rate of less than 5% (based on a seven day average), they will reopen. An official determination from the Governor's office will be made utilizing data gathered after August 1. The data would continue to be monitored throughout the month and the decision could change based on the infection rate. School buildings would be required to close if the infection rate in a region exceeds 9%.

Earlier this week, we also received updated guidance from the NYS Department of Health specific to reopening of schools, and just yesterday we received a 145 page reopening document from the NYS Education Department.

Though we are still in the process of thoroughly reviewing all of this documentation and guidance, so we fully understand and are positioned to implement all the requirements, our planning has continued. The administration has met regularly with various constituent groups, including our parent group. Our instructional group, which consists of a representative group of teachers, has made progress in developing a schedule that can be utilized under a variety of scenarios, including: in-person instruction, remote instruction, or a hybrid (combination of in-person and remote) model. Members of this group are participating in a variety of professional development opportunities that will better position us to provide instruction under any of these potential scenarios.

Beginning next week, we will expand our reopening conversations to include others. We will meet with smaller groups of staff, including grades K-2, grades 3-5, middle school, and special areas, to better understand and plan for particular needs. We will also meet next week with our transportation providers.

Now that we have additional guidance, we will be finalizing a survey for parents and families that will go out next week. The survey will be available in a number of languages.

We will continue to keep you informed as new information becomes available. Please feel free to contact me via email: mlong@menands.org, or via phone (518) 465-4561 ext. 101.

Sincerely,

Dr. Maureen A. Long

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