

Dr. Bishop lub ntsiab lus ntawm nrab hli
11/13/2020

Kuv qhov kev txiav txim siab ncuu txoj kev qhib tsev kawm ntawv yog qhov nyuaj tab sis tsim nyog vim kev cuam tshuam thoob hauv peb lub zej zog.

Cov kws qhia ntawv tau ua tiav txoj haujlwm zoo nrog kev qhia online nrog kev pab ntawm cov tub ntxhais kawm thiab tsev neeg. Txawm hais tias muaj tej yam zoo, qhov zoo los kawm dua yog kawm tim ntsej tim muag Kuv tau cog lus tias yuav tau txais cov tub ntxhais kawm rov qab mus rau hauv tsev kawm ntawv kom sai li sai tau.

Tsis yog kuv ib leeg. Governor Dunleavy tau hais rau cov superintendent tias kev cob qhia peb cov menyuum yuav tsum yog qhov tseem ceeb rau peb txhua tus.

Ntau tus kws saib xyuas kev noj qab haus huv uas pom zoo tias tsev kawm ntawv yuav yog qhov chaw nyab xeeb tshaj plaws rau cov tub ntxhais kawm thiab cov neeg ua haujlwm.

ASD yuav txuas ntxiv npaj rau kev mus rov qab hauv tsev kawm. Cov pab pawg me uas tau tab tom muab ntxiv. Ncav tes rau koj lub tsev kawm ntawv kom paub txog cov kev kawm no.

Peb cov kws qhia ntawv tau ua txoj haujlwm zoo uas siv cov kev kawm deb, qee tsev neeg yuav xaiv kawm virtual txuas ntxiv. Txawm li cas los xij, kev kawm tim ntsej tim muag yog qhov tseem ceeb rau kev kawm kom zoo. Qhov tau txais cov tub ntxhais kawm rov qab mus kawm ntawv yuav tsum kom tag nrho lub zej zog muab qhov kev kawm ua qhov tseem ceeb. Lub School Board yuav txuas ntxiv mus tham txog thaum twg yuav rov qab mus rau kev kawm ntawv tim ntsej tim muag, 11/16/2020.

Ua tsaug,

Dr. Bishop
Superintendent:

Dear ASD Families and Staff,

My decision earlier this week to postpone the start of in-person school for students in Pre-K – Grade 2, self-contained special education classrooms, and the Whaley School was difficult but necessary given the conditions across our community.

Our educators have done tremendous work this semester partnering with students and families as we launched our online model of instruction. Through their efforts, learning is happening. However, it is not equitable for all students. Despite all the good things taking place, learning is more meaningful, and achievement is greater in a face-to-face learning environment. It is with this in mind that I remain committed to getting all of our students back into school buildings just as soon as possible.

And I am not alone. Governor Dunleavy told superintendents across the State yesterday that in calling for greater measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, his intent was to ensure schools and businesses can open and remain open. His message was clear – educating our children should be a priority for all of us.

Many health professionals agree, with the widespread transmission, schools may be some of the safest places in the community for our staff and students. When mitigation plans are followed, schools are not the super spreaders we once believed. It is apparent that within our community, the conflicting opinions and dialogue about schools returning children to classrooms have reached nearly every dining room table in our city's homes (which consequently are serving as classroom desks too).

The questions I face every day are similar to these conflicting positions as we consider the health threats of going back to face-to-face learning versus the educational, mental, and emotional consequences for kids and the economic impact of being out of classrooms on families. From my educational vantage point, our children are carrying too much of the pandemic burden by not being given the opportunity of in-person school.

A recent report from the World Health Organization (WHO), shares there have been few outbreaks reported in schools since early 2020, and in those few outbreaks, it was more likely that the virus was introduced by adult personnel. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 90 percent of affected children have been household contacts of previously affected adults. The Washington Post reported yesterday that casual, in-home gatherings are most likely the culprit in driving the current COVID-19 spike. Hence, new guidance from the CDC as well as a request the Anchorage mayor have encouraged us to keep our holiday celebrations small, with limited guests in our immediate “bubbles.”

In the meantime, ASD will continue planning for a phased-in approach to getting all students back into school buildings. The small-group programs we currently offer in our schools are being expanded. Also, our middle and high schools are offering in-person tutoring for English language learners, students with individual education plans, and students struggling with on-line learning. Please reach out to your school to learn more about what programs they offer for small-group, in-person learning.

With all the attention focused on our youngest learners in recent weeks, I want to acknowledge that this break from in-person learning has also been extremely difficult on our middle and high school students. The entire community should be proud of the independence, patience, and resilience our secondary students have shown this fall considering the experiences they've lost during the pandemic.

Again, our teachers are doing a phenomenal job given the current challenges of teaching remotely, and some families may choose to remain in a virtual setting. However, as a whole, face-to-face learning is essential to a quality education and getting students back into schools will require the entire community to make education a priority. Although we cannot yet put a firm date on the calendar, the School Board will continue to deliberate Monday when to allow students back to school. I am optimistic that with the community's help, we will resume in-person learning.

Sincerely,

*Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.
Superintendent*