

March 5, 2021

Dear Timberlane community,

I truly hope you all had an enjoyable February break and are ready to finish out the year strong. It has almost been a full year that our lives have been impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic. All of us have been impacted in some way, big or small. Whether it is from a personal loss, contracting and recovering from the illness, or adjusting to the disruption of normal routines and ways of life, we can all relate to this idea of change. It is my hope that we can emerge from this adjustment stronger and more committed than ever to the educational achievements of our Timberlane students. I want to think of this time in our history, not for the negative impacts, but for the positive changes we have made from it. We have certainly seen the commitment that TRSD staff have to our students, but more importantly, we have seen many of our students demonstrate grit and flexibility, even though their lives have been turned upside down. We need to continue to support our students by not focusing on the things that have been lost, but instead, on the life skills they have obtained by constantly and consistently showing resilience and perseverance. It is these "real world," work study practices that will have the greatest impact on our students moving forward in their lives.

When TRSD chose to start the 2020/2021 school year in a hybrid model, it was done so under the understanding that conditions change and the district model of instruction will likely change throughout the year. At this time, with approximately one third of the school year left to go, I would like to give you all an update on where the district model stands, and give you all some updates on important factors as they impact the health and safety of all TRSD staff, students and community. Please read through the following bullet points for an understanding of new information, and how things are changing at this point. If you would have any specific questions as to how any of these changes impacts you or your child, please reach out to your building principal directly.

PLAN FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR: TRSD is planning on returning to a full in-person model of instruction 5 days a week for students the week of March 22nd. Any student wishing to stay fully remote has the option of staying remote and still accessing their academic classes.

- 12th graders will return in person 4 days a week, the week of March 1st
- 11th graders will return in person 4 days a week, the week of March 8th
- 9th and 10th graders will return in person 4 days a week, the week of March 15th
- K-12 graders will return in person 5 days a week, the week of March 22.
- Secondary schools will revert to the A/B daily rotation the week of March 22.

RETURN TO 5 DAYS A WEEK- MEDICAL NEEDS: Parents are reminded that students who are returning 5 days a week, and need medication during the day, ensure that:

- The school nurse(s) have a current physician's order for that medication
- There is an appropriate medication supply.
- The "Request for Medicine/Treatment During School Hours" form is completed (if they have not already done so for the year).

HEALTH AND SAFETY: There will be minimal health and safety changes, as much of what was described in the original return to school plan will remain in place.

- Masks will continue to be worn in all TRSD buildings. (Please see an update to masks below).
- Hand sanitizers in hallways and classrooms will continue to be encouraged for use throughout the day.
- Cleaning supplies (wipes) will continue to be provided in every classroom and common space (café, library, etc.) and students will continue to be expected to use those to wipe down their desk, chair, and or table, when they are leaving that space.
- The custodial staff will continue to do routine cleaning throughout the day which involves wiping down doors/ door handles, and cleaning bathrooms multiple times each day.
- The custodial staff will continue to clean the building nightly, but will increase the use of the electrostatic disinfectant spray to now be every night, in all areas (classrooms, halls, café, gym, library, etc.).
 - New research shows that the COVID-19 virus is viable for only about 3 hours outside of the body, therefore daily cleaning as described above should provide an enhanced level of mitigation.
- Social distancing will decrease to 3-6 feet in many classrooms in order to accommodate the increased number of students in the buildings. 6 foot distancing will continue to be enforced when eating (snacks, lunches, etc.). At the October 15th TRSB school board meeting, social distancing requirements were amended to reflect a minimum of 3-6 foot distancing with mandatory masks in all areas of school buildings.

METRICS: The TRSD School board and administration continues to receive detailed COVID-19 Metrics to highlight regional and local metrics in relation to both NH DHHS guidance and CDC guidance for school operations. The TRSD school board and administration are kept abreast of any changes to guidance as published by NH DHHS and or CDC.

STATE ISSUED EMERGENCY ORDERS: NH Governor John Sununu has issued ‘back to school emergency order #85 on February 19, 2021

-All NH schools must offer at least 2 days a week in person education by at latest March 8th, 2021

-Schools can not go longer than 48 hours in fully remote, without direct approval from the NH Department of Education, in direct consultation with medical advice.

END OF THE YEAR EVENTS: End of the year/ season events will continue to occur, in accordance to state, regional and local guidelines.

-End of season athletic recognition events have occurred at the end of the fall and winter seasons, and continue to be planned for the spring.

-End of year academic achievement events (honors recognitions, awards nights, scholarship events, etc.) are currently being planned

-End of year ‘move-up’ events, graduation celebrations, and social events (parties, Prom, etc.) are currently being planned.

VACCINES: NH has announced that they are ready to begin phase 2a (which includes all school employees) of the vaccine plan by the end of March 2021. The goal would be to have all school employees (who can or choose to get the vaccine) fully vaccinated by the end of this school year, or at least the start of the 2021/ 2022 school year. Ideally all NH residents that can or choose to, will get vaccinated by the end of calendar year 2021, and that will help to ensure ‘herd immunity’ to protect

everyone against this virus. Current research shows that the vaccines are approximately 90%-95% effective against most strains of the COVID-19 virus.

MASKS: New mask guidance is suggesting that ‘double masking’ with a cloth mask over a tight fitting surgical mask is greater than or equal to 90% effective at stopping the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Both cloth and surgical masks are easily available and relatively inexpensive, therefore can provide an immediate, low cost level of protection close to that provided by an N95 mask, or the vaccine. Please see the following information from the CDC on more information on the effectiveness of ‘double masking’: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7007e1.htm>

REMOTE INSTRUCTION: Although TRSD believes that most students learn best from face to face interactive instruction, TRSD will continue to offer remote instruction for those students who need/ desire this accommodation. TRSD will continue to ask that students who are accessing classes remotely, to turn their cameras on, to engage in thoughtful and appropriate discussion, and to generally be visually and auditory ‘present’ in their classes. We ask that if you have requested your child to be in person, that your child comes into school interacting with the live in-person educational community that teachers and students create in person. That being said, if your child is quarantined, demonstrating any COVID-19 signs and symptoms, or feeling sick, we ask that they stay home and attempt to at least access their class remotely.

Again, I thank you for your support and understanding as the entire TRSD navigates the ever changing conditions to help ensure a safe and healthy positive learning experience for our children.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian Cochrane
Superintendent of Schools