Greater Johnstown School District

Pleasant Avenue Elementary ● Warren Street Elementary ● Johnstown Junior-Senior High ● The Knox Building

August 13, 2021

Dear Families of the Greater Johnstown School District,

The entire GJSD team is planning for the start of the 2021-22 school year. We are enthusiastic for the safe return of all students to full-time, in-person learning. Since the last day of school in June 2021, our attention has been focused on preparing our schools and staff to ensure a smooth and complete opening on Sept. 7.

I had hoped for our community to be in a different position in its battles against the COVID-19 pandemic as we near the beginning of our new school year. As agencies are reporting an uptick in positive cases in Fulton County and surrounding communities, we are thoroughly examining the data and the variables around those data as we make important decisions that affect students. Very recently, Fulton County was identified as an area of "substantial transmission" on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website.

Unlike the 2020-21 school year, we have been informed that the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and our local Fulton County Public Health Department will not be overseeing reopening mandates or requirements for school reopening; they are delivering recommendations. Decisions have been left to local school districts to implement individual plans specific to their community.

As superintendent of schools, I want to let our families know where the District stands at this time and give you an idea about what we anticipate the start of the new school year will look like at Johnstown. I have taken all recommendations into consideration, including those from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP), the Fulton County Department of Health (DOH), and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

Please know that these reopening guidelines were created with two priorities in mind — the **safety of our staff and students, and returning to consistent in-person instruction**. These guidelines will continually be assessed by administration and if/when we are able to ease restrictions, we will.

1. **100% IN-PERSON LEARNING**: Most importantly, **all students** K-12 will be back in-person starting Sept. 7. We will discontinue last year's hybrid purple/gold learning model and bring back 100% of our students and teachers in-person.

2. **NO REMOTE LEARNING**: I strongly believe that the best place for a child to learn is in school, a belief that is in alignment with the recommendations of the AAP and the NYSED. There are no mandatory requirements for school districts to offer remote learning. However, each student will once again be provided with a Chromebook in the event that we need to temporarily switch to remote learning at any time this school year.

3. **MASKS REQUIRED**: The District will follow the advice of the CDC, NYSED, DOH and AAP and require all staff, students and visitors to wear a mask while indoors, regardless of vaccination status. We will incorporate common sense measures for mask wearing. Masks do not need to be worn outside while on any of the GJSD campuses.

4. **3 FOOT SOCIAL DISTANCING**: It will be the District's normal expectation that all students and staff maintain a physical distance of three feet, wherever and whenever possible.

5. **CLEANING PROTOCOLS**: The District will continue rigorous, common-sense, state-of-the-art cleaning protocols, particularly for highly trafficked indoor areas and anything handled by multiple people throughout the day.

There are many more details that we are working on (daily health attestations and screenings, temperature taking, etc.), but the five items mentioned above are likely of most interest to our families right now.

We will continue to closely monitor COVID-19 transmission and vaccination coverage in our community. We will play our part so that statistics start to turn for the better again, which will allow us to ease restrictions.

I am certain that no single plan can satisfy everyone, but I am confident that ours is responsible and prioritizes in-person and safe learning. Ultimately, we need to provide a guaranteed curriculum through in-person learning, as well as all extracurricular opportunities (academics, arts, and athletics) to the fullest extent possible.

I will be presenting and processing details of the reopening plan to the Board of Education at their regular monthly meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 19, at the Knox Building. As always, the public is welcome to attend.

Best wishes for an enjoyable summer and an outstanding year of learning ahead.

Sincerely,



Dr. William Crankshaw