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Dr. Patrick Shelton, Superintendent

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July 21, 2021

Dear District #7 Community:

In August, schools within District #7 will be open five days a week. We look forward to providing a school experience for students that is reminiscent of the school experience prior to COVID-19. We are also committed to maintaining a safe environment for students and staff throughout the 2021-2022 school year. As a result, we will still need to be responsive to the data around school and community spread and will be working on developing a Back to School Plan that will be presented at a Board of Education meeting on August 4. Following the updated guidance to schools from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the adoption of that guidance by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), a task force was created with representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups within District #7 including administrators, teachers, parents and community members.

The new guidance prioritizes in-person learning, encourages layering mitigations, provides recommendations and gives districts local control over decisions regarding layered mitigations. Currently, the number of positive cases in Madison County continues to rise, and more specifically, the positive number of youth cases continues to rise. We will continue to monitor the data as our task force continues their work, and ensure that members of the task force have the most updated data available. Our task force will continue to meet to gather information and provide input for how we can best provide a safe learning environment for all students five days a week.

At the Board of Education meeting on July 19, the Board approved the adoption of a new resource for K-5 ELA instruction, as well as a universal curriculum for social-emotional learning for grades K-8. It is exciting to see District #7 continue to move forward in fulfilling the promises of Prop E, while also being responsive to supporting students as we move out of the pandemic. In addition, we continue to work on expanding student and staff access to technology and increasing the number of student devices available for grades K-8.

As we approach the start of the 2021–22 school year, I recognize that there are still a number of questions our school community may have. We are still working through gathering more information and clarity from our District partners and I look forward to sharing more information immediately following the Board of Education meeting on August 4. While the coming school year will definitely look and feel like a more traditional school year than last year, we will remain vigilant in following our layered mitigations to keep our students and staff healthy and safe.

We are excited about having students back in our building, and excited to have the opportunity to move back toward school as we know it.

With Tiger Pride

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Shelton".

Patrick Shelton, Ed. D.  
Superintendent