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Dr. Patrick Shelton, Superintendent

August 13, 2021

Dear District #7 Community:

The first week of school has been an exciting one for students, staff and parents in District #7! Our week started with a Back-to-School Pep Rally that was held virtually due to weather, open houses at each of our schools for parents and students to drop off supplies, meet teachers, and reconnect with their school community, and the first days of school. It has been energizing to see smiles on faces of so many in our community – even through masks! We are truly excited to be starting the year!

We are also continuing to work on effectively implementing the layered strategies that we know are so important in providing a safe environment for students and staff in District #7. The one area that continues to be an area of improvement is within our cafeterias – especially in our middle and high schools.

In consulting with our public health officials, there are two things we can do to improve the environment in cafeterias: distance as much as possible, and improve air circulation.

As a result, beginning next week students at the middle and high schools will have the opportunity to eat outside during lunch. We will be putting up large tents and seating so that we can reduce the overall population in each of the cafeterias by at least 30%. This will allow more distance between students while in the cafeteria, and also provide the opportunity for a larger number students to eat outside when they wish to do so. We also continue to look at spacing at all schools and will increase spacing between students as much as possible.

In addition, we also are evaluating the possible purchase of additional air filtration systems for cafeterias where 6' of distancing is not possible. The availability of these systems would provide additional HEPA filtration for cafeterias.

Next week, we will relaunch the District #7 COVID Dashboard to provide members of our community with weekly updates regarding the number of students and staff who are isolated or excluded due to COVID-19.

District #7 will continue to evaluate our plans, monitor community data, and modify the strategies we have in place in order to ensure a safe environment for students and staff, and continue focusing on our goal of keeping students safely in school 5 days a week. We look forward to seeing everyone back next week for a full week of learning. Have a wonderful weekend!

With Tiger Pride,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Shelton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patrick Shelton, Ed.D.  
Superintendent