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Dr. Patrick Shelton, Superintendent

August 27, 2021

Dear District #7 Community:

The Board of Education for District #7 met on Monday evening for their regular meeting which included the approval of the tentative budget for the 2021-2022 school year, the approval of bids for auditorium upgrades at Lincoln and Liberty Middle Schools as well as Edwardsville High School, and approval of personnel which included the hiring of Mrs. Mary Ann Mitchell as the Coordinator for Communications and Public Relations. We are excited to continue to grow our staff to support our students, our teachers, and our community through effective and timely communication.

At the Board meeting, I also provided the Board and our community with an update on a variety of COVID-related topics. On Tuesday, August 17 we published the COVID Dashboard providing initial numbers of staff and students who tested positive for COVID or were excluded from school due to close contact. With this week's dashboard, we have added to the data to include whether exposure for close contacts occurred at school or at home, as well as the overall percentage of the student and staff population which have been isolated from the past seven-day period. We will continue to monitor the data weekly and make adjustments in our back to school plan as necessary.

This week, District #7 started offering rapid antigen testing and PCR testing through the clinic that was opened at Liberty Middle School. Through our partnership with Northshore Clinical Labs, we are offering testing to students and staff from 3:30 – 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Individuals interested in testing can sign up for a testing time at the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/edwardsville-school-district-covid-19-testing-at-liberty-middle-school-tickets-168171658959>

Results from the rapid test are available immediately, and PCR results are usually available within 24 hours of testing.

Like most businesses, District #7 continues to experience shortages in staffing. At this point in time we are short 13 instructional assistants, 8 monitors, 15 food service employees, 1 School Safety Officer, 5 Custodial positions, and 32 Kid Zone Counselors. Obviously, this has affected our ability to provide levels of service to students and especially in food service as compared with past years. We also are experiencing limitations in food delivery which means we provide substitutions at times without notice (or with limited notice). So – for students in District #7 – this means no chocolate milk, no french fries, and the cheese pizza you're expecting might end up being Bosco Sticks. However, if you know someone looking for full-time or part-time work send them to our website!

I also provided the Board and community with an update regarding the relaunch of our strategic planning process next month. District #7 will be kicking off a new 5-year strategic planning process on Thursday, September 23 at 6:30 p.m. in the EHS Commons. Everyone is invited to take part in determining the goals and priorities of District #7 as we look to 2027! . This is an exciting time to be a part of District #7 and I look forward to seeing members of our community engage in the strategic planning process on September 23!

We have tentatively started the process of moving the location of our Board of Education meetings from Woodland Elementary to the auditorium at Liberty Middle School. The auditorium will provide additional sound and technology resources as well as more space which is accessible to our community. We have appreciated having Woodland available to our Board and staff, and look forward to moving to Liberty Middle School in October 2021.

Finally, Mr. Dave Courtney, Assistant Superintendent of Business Operations, provided a year-end review of District #7's financial status. I'm proud to report that during the 2020-2021 school year, District #7 was able to remain on solid financial ground while also continuing to fulfill the promises made with the passing of Proposition E in 2017.

Thank you to our community for continuing to trust us with the resources provided, and especially for allowing us to work with your children. Have a wonderful weekend!

With Tiger Pride,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Patrick Shelton".

Patrick Shelton, Ed.D.
Superintendent