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Dr. Patrick Shelton, Superintendent

August 4, 2021

Dear District #7 Community:

Our goal this year is to provide a safe learning environment for students and staff in District #7, and be able to sustain that learning environment five days a week throughout the school year. Earlier this evening, the Board of Education approved the Back to School Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. Over the past year, we've learned how important it is to have kids in school, and we believe that the plan presented to the Board of Education will provide each student in District #7 with the best opportunity to be in school, safely avoid exposure to any virus, and be able to stay in school five days a week.

The Back to School Plan layers many different prevention strategies in an effort to ensure a safe learning environment. In all of our schools, cleaning and sanitizing, social distancing to the extent possible, cohorting students through assigned seating in classrooms, and universal mask-wearing will all be strategies which are implemented at each of the schools in District #7.

We recognize that wearing a mask every day can be a challenge for many of us, and especially for our learners. While wearing a mask will be required, we also will provide students with mask breaks when requested and provide accommodations for those students for whom wearing a mask may present emotional issues, create anxiety, or negatively impact their learning.

District #7 will also be offering two types of Covid testing programs in partnership with two third party providers beginning soon after the start of school: a screening program called SHIELD testing which uses a saliva-based test, and an antigen-testing program, Binax, which is conducted via a nasal swab. More information regarding testing will be communicated separately to District #7 after the school year starts. Parent permission will be required before administering any type of medical test.

With all of these measures in place, students in District #7 may have the opportunity to follow updated guidelines for quarantine which have been provided by Illinois Department of Public Health, so that each student in District #7 has the opportunity to stay healthy and stay in school five days a week.

Please be on the lookout for additional communication in the coming weeks regarding district testing and how to provide permission for your child to be tested this school year. Thank you, again, for your input and partnership as we welcome students and staff back next week!

With Tiger Pride,

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

Patrick Shelton, Ed.D.
Superintendent