



August 10, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We understand that some are not in favor of our decision to begin in the hybrid model. We know that you have your child(ren) in mind when you make decisions specific to your family. The administration and staff in the School District of Washington know we must be considerate of nearly 4000 students and 700 part-time, full-time and substitute staff. The decisions are never easy and they've been especially hard these last few months. We've analyzed our internal operations, re-designed our schedules, protocols and instruction. It has been an extremely stressful task, but we've kept going. The decisions are based on countless conversations with medical professionals, public health officials, school leadership from the state and throughout the country, along with a large volume of guidance.

We will use the first 30 days of school in the hybrid model to consistently analyze these new protocols in an attempt to keep COVID-19 from infiltrating our schools. We know that if we were to have an outbreak, (typical guidance is 5% of building population in one day, 4% over two days, or 3% over three days) schools will be closed for a period of time. We know that if one of our staff members is in close contact or tests positive for COVID-19 that they will be quarantined for 10 days. We know there isn't a long line to substitute teach. We know that finding a sub in a typical school year is difficult, much less during a pandemic. We know, because we measured our classrooms, that we will need to reduce our class size and seating arrangements. We know that our hallways need to have fewer in transition at our middle school and high school. We know that we need to follow the face covering guidance. We know we will need to have seating charts in the event we have to contact trace and notify parents. These are just a few of the obstacles schools are working through.

These are the realities of the situation we are in. There is nothing more important to us than educating our students. Trust me when we say, we can't wait to see them! We would love nothing more than to be in school, every day, carrying on as if not in a pandemic. But, that isn't the case. So, instead of starting in full attendance and taking our chances, we are going to begin in the hybrid with the idea that it is our best chance of seeing your kids part or all of the time. We feel strongly that if we can be successful in the hybrid, we will then be able to transition to green (in session 5 days per week with all students). The reverse would likely cause a closure before any transition back to a hybrid model could be achieved. We didn't create this pandemic, and we certainly know there are mixed feelings about it. Neither of these things we can change. We listened to parents, staff, medical professionals and the public health officials and collectively, after careful analysis, made this decision. Together, we can make the most of this bad situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori VanLeer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Lori VanLeer  
Superintendent of Schools