



**Office of  
Superintendent of Schools  
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Aug. 6, 2021

Dear GPPSS Community,

I am excited to welcome our staff and children in our schools in just four short weeks. All of us are looking forward to a safe and positive start to our school year. While our staff and families did an exceptional job navigating remote and hybrid learning, we all know that the best place for our students is in our buildings working with our exceptional staff.

All of us want the COVID pandemic to be behind us, but the reality is that COVID is still present in our society. The Delta variant is causing significant surges in COVID numbers in various areas of our country. We are thankful that currently COVID numbers in the local GPPSS area are low, but we must remain vigilant. One of the best ways to help ensure our schools remain open is for as many members of our community as possible to become vaccinated. If you (or your children) are vaccine eligible and are not yet among the approximately 80% of our community that has been vaccinated, I encourage you to do so. This will help all of us stay safe.

The attached document outlines our current stance on various COVID mitigation measures based on local COVID data. Included in these measures is our current “mask optional” position. While we intend to start the school year with these measures as outlined, we will adjust them as needed.

While COVID has been at the forefront of our minds the past 18 months, it is certainly not the only consideration. As we prepare for the start of this school year, please know that GPPSS is focusing on the following to help ensure your child or children have an outstanding school year with us:

- Assessing learning gaps and needs to tailor student instruction in our classrooms.
- Implementing various social emotional interventions, including middle school advisory, to support the emotional health of our students.
- Designing and implementing equitable interventions to support our students based on individual needs.
- Providing a “normal” start to the school year that includes athletics, clubs, activities, and all the amazing, fun elements we remember from our own days in school.

I was at a local business this weekend and was stopped by a community member who asked me how I felt about this coming school year. I paused and chose the word “optimistic.” I’m optimistic because no district has a stronger community than we have. I’m optimistic because no district has the level of professional and gifted staff that we have. I’m optimistic because we are all fortunate enough to live and serve in a community that cares.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Jon Dean'.

Jon Dean  
Superintendent