

River Dell Regional School District

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

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November 4, 2020

Dear River Dell Community,

Over the past several months, we have had unprecedented community engagement in our Board meetings. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to join us and to share their thoughts. Additionally, we appreciate all the emails we have received in response to the current situation and how it might be affecting different school populations.

We understand that it can be frustrating when you take the time to attend meetings, give feedback, ask questions, and then see decisions being made seemingly without considering these efforts. This could not be further from the fact.

As you know, a committee of students, community members, administration, staff, and board members worked diligently to prepare our initial reopening plan. The Board unveiled that plan at our July meeting. As the school year's start date approached, we altered this plan to ensure a safe and successful opening of the buildings.

After much discussion and disagreement among the Board and the community, we moved forward in a decisive, democratic, and unified manner. We heard all the concerned voices. The Board contemplated online fatigue, class schedule, the virtual programs, and whether the hybrid program would provide enough instructional time.

After several weeks of implementing the hybrid model, some reevaluation was necessary. An examination revealed what was working and what could be changed to enhance the educational and instructional experience. The schedule that will go into effect on November 9th is what came out of that process.

We recognize that some may have approached this process differently and may have come to different conclusions. You should know that all involved worked with the students' best interests and staff in mind. Decisions had to be made while weighing regulations, mandates, health standards, size limitations, alignment between schools for familial consistency, and more.

There is no perfect solution because everyone wants what we cannot have - a traditional school experience.

We send this letter in hopes of keeping the lines of communication open. We ask that you begin the new schedule with an open mind and continue to give valuable feedback. If, after several weeks, changes present themselves, we will consider another version. Please try to remember that with 1600+ students' needs to consider when finding a solution, finding one that satisfies everyone's wants is unrealistic, but working to find the one in which all feel they are thriving is our goal.

Sincerely,

The River Dell Board of Education