

Sutton Public Schools
Office of the Superintendent



Theodore F. Friend, Superintendent

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September 10, 2020

Good morning and welcome back, Sutton School Community:

As we ease back into school over the next few weeks, I ask that we all do our part to stay positive, supportive and understanding. There is wide ranging views of COVID-19 and it is so important to be respectful of everyone's beliefs. COVID-19 has been around less than a year and every day there are conflicting reports in the media as to how dangerous this disease is for different segments of the population. I have literally read or watched hundreds of reports and it is astounding how often one report contradicts another. What we do know is that there are simple ways to greatly minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Students, parents, and staff, please commit to the universal safety measures that we have seen for the last 6 months. Kindly wear your mask on the bus and in school each day and wash your hands often for, at least, 20 seconds. Please, please, please do not come to school if you do not feel well. Finally, it is important to respect everyone's personal space (6 feet of social distancing) to the best of your ability. By following these simple rules, which are difficult to do consistently, we will protect one another and minimize the potential of a significant outbreak.

This is the first time in more than 100 years that we are returning to public school during a pandemic. There is no one correct answer as to how best to open schools and, fortunately or unfortunately, schools will be used to study this disease. Yes, we are taking a cautious approach, to some too cautious, but erring on the side of the health and safety of our students and staff we believe is a prudent first step. The first four weeks of school will give us plenty of data to examine as we determine the next steps. By starting the year using both models, we can more easily go from hybrid to remote and vice versa. Neither model can replace what we all yearn for, a full return to school for all children and the calming sense of normalcy.

I would also ask that we take this moment in time and view it as an opportunity. This fall all students will receive a Chromebook, all students and staff will be trained in zoom and google classroom, and the district is taking a giant step in changing how we approach education for the benefit of our students.

The 2020-2021 school year is going to be a challenge, but in my 10 years of service as Superintendent I have learned that the Sutton community comes together better than most during a time of need. Our goal is to get through the first four weeks of school, assess where we are as a school district with the goal to return to in-person learning as soon as practicable.

Thank you for your patience and understanding,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theodore F. Friend".

Superintendent