



Clare Public Schools

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June 30, 2021

Pioneer Families,

I am hopeful that your summer is off to an excellent start...that you're finding family time, adventures, and good books as often as possible. After what can only be called a tumultuous but successful school year in Clare, I have looked forward to this message for a long time.

First...thank you for all of your efforts last year. For your patience, support, and enthusiasm in a difficult time. I have to believe that our experiences a year ago will benefit us in the future. We did many things well, and we will continue to learn from our mistakes. All this has positioned us to make local decisions about what is best for our kids and community.

As you likely know, the restrictions, orders, and mandates regarding COVID-19 have been removed. We are largely back to NORMAL in our personal lives, and subsequently it is time to get back to normal in our school lives. We'll continue to look out for each other as only Pioneers can do...that will include emphasizing hand washing, regular home health screening, and keeping sick/symptomatic folks at home. Indeed, these are the things that we can verify worked for us last year. We believe these less intrusive mitigation measures will help with the spread of seasonal & common viruses, including COVID-19...all while allowing us to have a great school year that focuses on the social, emotional, mental, and academic health of our kids!

Yes, COVID-19 is still present in our county and country. We will still need open communication with families for when difficult situations arise. Ultimately, if COVID or any other virus were to surge again, we have gained powerful experience that can help us take necessary measures to protect each other and continue learning...in person! Please remember that no area school maintained safe and consistent in-person learning at the level we did. You all have a great deal to be proud of.

For those who remain concerned about COVID-19, we will continue to follow the law, partner with the Health Department, and work together to keep all safe. The health and safety of our students, staff, and community is still our top priority.

Masking will be a choice for any staff member, student, or visitor. CHOICE is important to our families and in our country as we return to NORMAL...and we'll embrace that. We'll *share* information regarding testing and vaccination on occasion, but leave those *choices* to families.

There is still no word from the MHSAA regarding fall sports, but our sincere hope is that any testing or masking protocols will be voluntary in nature. Regardless, we'll see our way through any hurdles on behalf of our student-athletes.

Perhaps most importantly, I want to be very clear that we will not participate in any protocols or procedures that would separate or create issues of equity among our students' access to school and programs as a result of vaccination status or the choice to wear masks. What worked for us so well last year was simply to "BE GOOD TO EACH OTHER." If we continue to do that, Clare only grows stronger.

Boy, am I ever excited for all of you to return this fall...but first, enjoy every minute of this summer! And I hope this message helps support a great summer. Clare is indeed a great place to live and learn, and we're intent on keeping it that way!

Sincerely,

Jim Walter, II