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# Lyle School District

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September 8, 2020

Dear Cougar Families,

Today, we are starting a new school year that has already been the most challenging we educators have faced in our careers. I recognize the immense challenge it means to you and your children, too. We've experienced some technical issues this first day, and we are working to overcome them. We appreciate your patience very much.

We'd like to have our students back in the classroom full-time. Despite our best efforts to make that happen, the reality is that we must start the school year doing our best to teach and learn remotely the majority of the time.

What can you expect from your school? How will instruction this fall be different from last spring?

Even in this hybrid scenario of students attending school one day a week, we are striving to create a live connection with our students every school day. We are working to create regular opportunities for students to interact with their teachers and peers. Counselors are available remotely and in person. School meals must still be provided. All of this is designed to provide our kids with the help they need to succeed.

Our reopening team – made up of teachers, administration and parents -- has spent the last few months working to make sure we are ready for this school year. Teachers are taking extra time to ensure they have plans in place to support each of our students. Our usual routines may be disrupted, but learning will go forward.

For now, we are permitted to have only small groups of five individuals per room. We are working closely with the health department to determine when we can bring larger groups back to school.

By pulling together as a community, we can achieve the conditions that the health department has said will be safe for larger groups to be in class. Together, we are playing a role in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and getting our schools completely open -- by practicing the three W's: Wear a face covering, watch our distance, and wash, wash, wash your hands.

Lyle School District has worked hard to support our teachers and our families through the pandemic, and we continue to. We have obtained a significant amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning materials, we've purchased additional technology to help in distance learning, and we've developed detailed plans for moving students from home, through the building and home again safely.

We need the help of staff, students and families to make this school year the best it can be. If something isn't working right with the learning experience, please let the teachers and Principal Smith know – and I ask that you do this with grace and patience as none of us have operated school in these circumstances. We know this isn't going to be easy, but your child's teachers and counselors are there to support you.

Stay in touch with us so that you and your child are an active part of the school community.

Give your family and other adults seeking to support you grace and patience as well. We will all need to lean on each other in these times.

Finally, I want to say thank you. I know that starting the school year learning mostly or entirely from home is not what any of us wanted, but until conditions improve, it's what we have to do to ensure the health and safety of you, your family, and the staff at school.

This year will teach all of us a lot about the importance of working together for a common goal. I think, in the end, it will make our children, our staff and our education system better and more resilient, too. As we move into the coming decades, being able to adapt to changes and challenges will be among our most important skills.

I'm proud of how far we've come already and I hope you feel a measure of pride as well. You deserve it!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Ann Varkados". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dr. Ann Varkados, Superintendent