Hello Dragon Families,

Before I update about our current school year, I want to first acknowledge the horrible tragedy that occurred 19 years ago. As I lowered our flags to half-staff this morning, I reflected on where I was the morning of September 11, 2001, driving home from working a graveyard shift and listening to the events unfold on the radio. The next twelve years of my law enforcement career were influenced by those events and how the industry adapted to a new age of information sharing and preparedness. But equally as memorable was the way our country united behind the victims, the first responders, and our leaders like I had never seen before or since.

Navigating COVID-19 on this date reminds me of the uncertainty, fears, and collective sense of loss that surrounded the weeks and months following 9/11. What seemed hopeless gave way to recovery, hope, cooperation, and a return to our everyday lives. Our thoughtful approach to reopening Flagstaff Academy during
the COVID-19 pandemic is drawing upon those lessons of preparedness and information sharing to safely reopen our school. We did not get to choose these circumstances and have been doing our best to work in the remote environment for the first quarter while looking forward to the second quarter with the hope that we have the health data and experience that will allow us to return to in person learning.

Please take a few moments to review my Executive Director Update presentation, linked below, that has also been shared with staff.

Executive Director Update Presentation for 9/11/2020

Return to In Person Considerations
Based on community health data and the success of other schools in operating in the COVID-19 pandemic, it is our intention to return to in person learning for the second quarter. At this time, we are considering two (2) in person options:

- **In Person Option One:**
  - Kindergarten through 2nd grade In Person, 4 days a week (Mon.-Thurs.)
  - 3rd-8th Grade Hybrid- 2 days a week in person, 2 days a week online
  - Fridays remain Asynchronous for all students
  - Continued small group support

- **In Person Option Two:**
  - Elementary (K-5) In Person, 4 days a week (Mon.-Thur.)
  - Middle School Hybrid- 2 days a week in person, 2 days a week online
  - Fridays remain Asynchronous for all students
  - Continued small group support

Middle School will be a hybrid model, regardless, due to known staffing and logistical challenges, but we know that our oldest Dragons have the greatest ability to work remotely and independently. Likewise, our youngest Dragons are at the greatest need for in person support to lay the foundations for future educational success. These two options accomplish the thoughtful return to the classroom for those with the greatest need. Both models will maintain our Friday Asynchronous learning days for staff development and planning. In addition, there will not be Late Starts or Staff In Service Days in these models.

**Family Preferences**
To prepare any return to in person learning, we need to quantify the preferences of our families to online or in person learning. **A fully remote learning option will remain for those families who prefer, due their own circumstances.** The in person learning model will depend on the ability for us to match up staffing and family preferences, facility usage, and logistics. But we must start with determining what students will remain 100% online, and those available for in person learning. Just like the first quarter, we ask families to commit to 100% online for the entire second quarter.
**Staffing Implications**
Just as some of our families have individuals who are at high-risk for complications from COVID, so does our staff. As I mentioned in early August, some of these conditions are protected by law and require employers to make reasonable accommodations for these employees for their health and safety. As we plan to return to in person learning, we must take into account the intentions of our families and our staff in developing these plans. This is a very complex undertaking to match up the needs of our stakeholders and develop plans to address them, while adhering to legal requirements as an employer.

**Budget Impacts**
Like many schools throughout the region, the COVID pandemic has resulted in many families choosing to homeschool their children, especially at the lower grade levels. We budgeted for an enrollment loss due to this uncertainty. Unfortunately, the depth of this impact is much greater than we could have anticipated and we are facing a massive budget shortfall due to lower enrollment. We are currently facing a revenue shortfall of over $900,000.00. We are using federal CARES Act relief funds, budget cuts, and savings from our spring 2020 shutdown to offset this shortage at this time. The result is an all-hands on deck approach to staffing and creative ways to reassign personnel to fill gaps left by the enrollment and budget shortfall.

**Cold and Flu Season**
It is not lost on us that we are heading into the typical cold and flu season. Some of the symptoms of COVID mirror those of typical cold and flu symptoms and based on Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment guidance, those students would be kept home regardless. CDPHE added a shorter evaluation period intended to weed out those cases and not force schools into quarantine or shutdown over these symptoms. [These guidelines can be viewed here](#) so parents know how we are making decisions. As in the past, we ask that sick children be kept home. If we all do our part, we can avoid unnecessary disruptions to our school.

**2nd Quarter Parent Input Needed!**
Please complete this survey for each student enrolled at Flagstaff Academy. These responses are due by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 15th. Preschool families, we will be communicating with you separately, so please do not fill out this form for those students.

[2nd Quarter Parent Input Survey](#)

Thank you for your continued patience and partnership with us during this pandemic. I know it impacts everyone in different ways and we are being transparent in our intentions to reduce the unknowns as we continue moving forward. We will continue to provide updates and input in the coming weeks.

Take care,

Wayne Granger