

September 7, 2020

Dear Lamoille North Families and Staff:

I extend a very warm welcome to all of you as we officially begin the 2020-2021 school year! It has been many months since I last saw most of you and I have missed seeing your smiling faces in the corridors of the schools and lively conversation in the classrooms and beyond. I am looking forward to a year of joy, health and safety, communication, deep learning, and collaboration. We have many things to celebrate!

Earlier today, I was driving on Stagecoach Road in Morrisville and spotted leaves graced with the first hues of red and orange, evidence that fall is almost here. Indeed, change is in the air. We will see changes in many things this year, beginning with different schedules and routines in our schools and new ways of interacting with each other. I want to assure you that we have spent several months planning for your return and establishing safety and health guidelines to ensure the best possible experience for you while we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. School will seem familiar and, at the same time, different. We will do whatever we need to support each other to identify what works, and improve what doesn't. We have all had to learn, to some extent, how to deal with uncertainty. However, given that we have built strong relationships, and have an outstanding staff and school community, we will work together through whatever comes our way.... And, we will thrive, of this I am sure.

All of our schools have made plans to begin school with unique building routines and schedules. However, I wanted to provide you with an overview of the work we have done to create a safe, healthy and rich learning environment for our students and staff. Embedded in this letter is a handbook that addresses reopening considerations, health and wellness, curriculum and learning expectations, nutrition services, transportation, facilities and cleaning protocols, and various Agency of Education memos. This guide will be updated regularly as changes are made. You can find the handbook [HERE](#).

In addition to establishing learning expectations, I want to stress that we will spend the first 30 days or so of school prioritizing the wellbeing of students and staff. We recognize how challenging the transition back to school might be for many, if not all, and we want to make sure that our students and staff feel welcome and embraced. There will be time spent on education around health and safety guidelines, daily routines and we will have many conversations around social-emotional wellbeing. We want to know how our students and staff are doing and about anything else that will help us provide the best environment for them. We care deeply about all members of our school community and are committed to ensuring their wellbeing.

I think the world of all of you and consider myself so fortunate to be a member of this school community. When I look at the landscape ahead, I see all of your faces front and center and I cannot imagine myself anywhere else. There is so much to be said for the power of empathy, love and humanity. I am so happy to begin this school year with all of you. Let's make it a great one!

My very best to you,

Catherine Gallagher, M.Ed.
Superintendent of schools
Lamoille North Supervisory Union