



East Lansing Public Schools

July 26, 2020

Dear East Lansing Public Schools staff, families and community,

I can hardly believe that we are only 30 days away from the first day of school for students. Even more alarming is that it's been over 19 weeks since we last had students in our buildings for learning. It's been a summer like no other – for everyone. I walk into a nearly empty high school every day – filled with sadness for the learning and experiences that are absent for our students but excited and hopeful for the day that staff and students can safely return to our school buildings.

This summer, Governor Gretchen Whitmer unveiled the [MI Safe Start Plan](#), a guide outlining a phasing structure to support Michiganders as we progress through the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, on June 30, a [MI Safe Schools: 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap](#) was provided to guide educators as they develop their own return-to-school plans based on each of the phases from the MI Safe Start Plan. Our region is currently in Phase 4 of the MI Safe Start Plan, which does allow for in-person instruction.

The ELPS team has spent hundreds of hours over the last three months working on a plan for the fall start of school, only to come to the conclusion that there is not a feasible plan that meets the desires and wishes of all stakeholders. This realization was difficult to acknowledge and accept as we returned day after day with new ideas, new paths to explore, and new potential schedules and models to evaluate. I can assure you that we turned over every stone before landing on a recommendation for fall instruction.

Regardless of instructional mode, I know that each and every teacher and staff member is looking forward to engaging with your children – educators thrive on this! We know that there are challenges ahead – along with questions, uncertainty, anxiety, and curiosity. ELPS is poised and ready to be flexible and adapt to new information and new guidance that will continue to come from the Governor's office, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Ingham County Health Department, the Michigan Department of Education, and other guiding organizations. We will continue to keep you updated through weekly district updates as well as building-specific communication that will begin coming out in August.

Thank you for your flexibility, patience and ongoing support as we navigate these new and uncertain times. We love and miss our students dearly and are prepared to teach and support them as we all gear up for the start of a new and unique school year.

Sincerely,

Dori Leyko, Superintendent