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PINE VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL
South Dayton, NY
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July 31, 2020

Pine Valley Panthers,

It is with great excitement that we prepare to welcome back our students and employees to school for the 2020-2021 school year. The past several months have been an unprecedented time, and it has been an honor to lead this district and witness first hand the strong community support and caring and hard-working administrators, teachers, and support staff. This time of social distancing has helped us grow together rather than apart, but we are very, very ready to have everyone back on campus.

In March, our shutdown came rather unexpectedly. It was beyond surprising and a strain on our school and community to have this shutdown last as long as it has. We tried to adapt and change as quickly as we could for our students knowing that we were in no way perfect or providing an ideal education. Our goal was to take care of our kids, take care of our families and take care of our team. We did our best to do that but know that there were many areas and challenges where we simply could not provide the same education as we can in person.

I was hired in this district to improve student achievement and build a culture. Instead my task quickly became leading in a time of disconnection, community and district strain, financial uncertainty and far from optimal teaching circumstances. This coming year we are faced with even more unknowns and challenges. We do not know how our students will have coped, grown or regressed during this time away. We do not know how education will need to change and evolve while still facing the pandemic. We do not know how families have changed and their needs from us have changed during this time. We do not know what the financial landscape from the state will be as the year progresses.

We do know after all of this that we are #pantherstrong. There is nowhere I would rather be. Thank you to the amazing Panther community both in and out of school for your response in this unprecedented time. I got to see the true benefit of coming from, and working in, the Pine Valley family. You can know that we will face every hurdle with a research mindset and make decisions that are the best for our kids and community. We are cognizant that decisions we make impact student and family health and wellbeing, community economic stability, and the education of every child in our district. We do not take these decisions lightly.

In preparation for the 2020-2021 school year reopening, we have been continuously studying guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health, and New York State Education Department. We have surveyed parents, teachers and staff. In each of those surveys, over 80% stated they wanted a return to in-person learning. Many conveyed concerns for their children's safety as a counterbalance to this want. Committees of various stakeholders have been meeting to create plans and protocols for the coming school year. If you served on one of these committees, thank you, thank you, thank you. We then took these plans as an administrative team and turned them into a comprehensive reopening plan specific to Pine Valley Central School. Our plan will not look the same as our neighbors as we are not the same as our neighbors nor are our students' needs. The plan was then given to the Board of Education on July 29, 2020 and submitted to the State Education Department on July 30, 2020 along with certain assurances that were necessary for the district to make.

Our reopening plan is posted on our website and hard copies are available by request from the district office. This is a fluid document that we will continue to add to and work on over the coming months. Please note that what is represented there now is our current plan. Guidance is changing daily, and there are a million factors that impact what reopening will look like. Our plan will, undoubtedly, continue to change over the coming weeks. **The purpose of this letter is to inform you of where we are at right now so you can prepare. Again, please know there is absolutely no guarantee that students can return to campus this Fall. The only guarantee we can**

make is that this is what we are planning based on guidance right now and that we will work hard to get kids back in school.

Our response for learning and meeting student needs in March was in no way perfect. We grew and evolved during the following months just as we will grow and evolve in the coming months. I can guarantee that this summer has provided us more time to open this coming year from a stronger, better-planned position, but in no way will we be perfect. We will continue to try our best and work harder than ever before. Please see the following points as our hope for reopening in September. Our entire plan is available, but these are the points I've identified as most important to families at this time. Several of them are a huge inconvenience to families, and we realize that; but they are necessary for us to be compliant with guidance and keep students safe and healthy. These points are meant purely to be transparent and offer some insight into what the start of school may look like for Pine Valley.

1. All students in elementary and junior/senior high school will attend school Monday-Thursday of each week.
2. Friday will be a day to deep clean the buildings and allow teachers time to prepare more effective remote models should the need arise. Print-based packets will be sent home for students' instruction.
3. Attendance will be taken daily including on the remote Fridays.
4. Bus times will be staggered with elementary students having a close-to-normal day and junior-senior high school students having a shorter day with some remote learning to balance this.
5. On buses, in hallways, any time social distancing cannot be utilized - including in the classroom - students will be expected to wear cloth face coverings. If families do not have these, they will be provided. All students will be given a minimum of a ten-minute mask break every forty minutes while in the classroom.
6. Families will be asked to complete a screening which includes taking their child's temperature prior to bus pick up or drop off of their child. The school will then check their temperature again. Any child with a temperature of 100.0 or higher will not be permitted on the bus or in the building.
7. Lunch will be served in classrooms to most students. A small group will be permitted in the cafeteria.
8. Students will stay in their classroom with one or two scheduled movement breaks out of the room. Teachers will rotate between classrooms wearing appropriate personal protective gear and following disinfecting protocols.
9. No visitors (including parents) will be permitted in the buildings during the school day.
10. Due to social distancing and the need to keep cohorts together, only one pick-up and drop-off location will be permitted for each student on buses.
11. For families dropping off students at school, a forty minute drop off window will be given. Students will not be permitted to exit their cars until they have been screened.
12. All classrooms have been redesigned to incorporate social distancing.
13. If we are unable to staff the building due to lack of substitutes, increased vulnerabilities, or a confirmed case of COVID-19, we will need to immediately pivot to remote learning for a time period to be determined at that time.
14. We are posting for an added guidance counselor position which we can sustain as a district by reallocating grant funds. This position will initially help us with addressing students' needs after our shut down and then transition to a career and college counseling role.
15. We have two new building principals who will be completely up to date on the plan and ready to dive into their roles. Mrs. Brandi Meacham is our new elementary principal and she has been an integral part of the reopening team already. Mrs. Kourtney Almeida was appointed at the July 29th Board of Education meeting as the new Jr./Sr. High School Principal. She will begin work with us on August 17th, and we are thrilled to welcome her HOME.
16. We will host a district and community wide zoom on August 13th at 4 pm to review our complete reopening plan with any interested families. On this zoom you will not be able to verbally comment but will be able to enter questions into the chat so that we can address them while in the Zoom. A link will be provided on our website and a reminder sent out closer to the date.

It is my hope that some of the work that we started prior to the pandemic - of culture building and a focus on improving student achievement - can continue. We will continue this hand in hand with reimagining the face of education to include social distancing, deep cleans, and face masks. If you see something we need to improve upon or that you need support with, please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone on our team. **We will keep growing, we will keep taking care of our students, our families and our team. We will all be here working hard each day to do what is best for our kids.**

Very Truly Yours,

Bryna Moritz Booth

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Superintendent