

Dear Students and Families,

As your family gathers over the next two weeks, there are some items to be considered and discussed around the kitchen table.

Learning Models for K-8th Grade

First, the window of opportunity to transfer in or out of the Virtual Academy and Blended Model is approaching. Beginning on January 1st and ending on January 10th, if you want to move your K- 8th grade student from Blended Learning to Virtual Academy or Virtual Academy to Blended, you'll have this 10-day period to make that change. Please note: **If you don't want to change learning models, you don't have to do anything.**

Learning Model for all 9th-12th Grade Students

Beginning with the next grading term starting on January 28, 2021, all virtual academy students in 9th-12th grades will be transitioned back to Granite Falls Middle School, Granite Falls High School or Crossroads High School. The three schools are doing blended learning but there is a strong likelihood that neither the middle school or high schools will return to in-person instruction this year. With a decline in enrollment, we need to make a financial decision that will still allow elements of distance learning but with students folded back into our schools. There will be an option for high school students who want independent learning, closer to the Virtual Academy approach, or if they want to rejoin classmates with a daily schedule. More information from the respective schools will be out in early January.

Snow Days

With the extensive use of technology for instruction over the past nine months, we look forward to providing learning opportunities each day of the school calendar this year without having to pause for a snow day. If a major storm were to occur this winter, assume school will be provided virtually.

Re-Opening Plans

As I write this letter home to families, the positive COVID numbers in Snohomish County are the highest they have been throughout this pandemic. Despite the bleak outlook for the immediate future, we continue to plan a re-opening for when health conditions improve. Ideally, we would like to resume the hybrid portion of blended learning in late January for our pre-school students, kindergartners, identified K-12 special education students who were in school in October, K-12 English Language Learners, K-12 students needing connection. If we can successfully bring these groups of students back for three weeks, we would then bring back 1st and 3rd grade students. ******Obviously, if the health conditions worsened, we would push out the re-opening to February or later.**

Example of an elementary students day in the Hybrid Model-
(All times are approximate, specific times are still being developed and shared closer to re-open)

When we do re-open with a hybrid model with our first group of students, a day will include the following:

9:00 - 10:30 AM	ALL Students will Zoom with their teacher and complete assignments for approximately 90 minutes
10:30 - 3:00 PM	Group A students will continue asynchronous learning for the remainder of the day.
10:30 - 12:30 PM	Group B Some students will work on asynchronous learning, eat lunch, prepare for school, walk, be driven by family or be picked up by bus and taken to school.
12:30 - 3:00 PM	Group B students will be at school for approximately 2.5 hours before being taken home.

Groups of students will rotate between remote and in person. Once we get a firm number of how many students are in this blended model per class, we will be able to share how often that rotation will occur.

Snohomish County Health Department

The Snohomish County Health Department has created a video addressing the role they play in providing guidance, specifically to school districts, during this pandemic. As you watch you will see that they often cite the authority to provide remote and/or in person instruction rests with the school district. In Snohomish County we have an array of learning opportunities from hybrid instruction for kindergartners through 2nd grade in addition to highly impacted student groups, to essentially remote instruction only. The Granite Falls School District has fallen into the latter category for two key reasons:

- a) the large number of staff who have taken COVID related leave as prescribed by the federal government, and
- b) the lack of substitutes.

We were on our way to expand our re-opening in November when a number of our staff members had to quarantine and we had few to no substitutes to step in for a 14-day period. I assure you that our teachers, staff and administrators anxiously await the return of students, but we are faced with a depleted staff and sub-pool. In the meantime, we continue to meet with students via Zoom every day to provide some sense of normalcy. Here is the link to the [Snohomish County Health video](#).

Finally, on behalf of the Granite Falls Board of Directors, I wish you a warm and safe holiday season. Enjoy this video from the [Granite Falls High School Cheer Team](#).

Dr. M

Our Mission: The Granite Falls School District is committed to the individual development of each student.