

Let's Make the Best of 2021

It goes without saying that 2020 was a challenging year. We have all experienced uncertainty and changes in even our day-to-day routines. In March, when the governor mandated remote learning for our students, staff and families of Dover Schools rose to the challenge. The support of our families at home was heroic, as we all made adjustments and supported each other to ensure learning continued.

Over the summer, we were all hopeful for normalcy, but also aware that we had to prepare to reopen our schools in spite of the challenges that COVID 19 imposed. We worked to build a learning plan with options for families. Our # 1 goal was to ensure students were physically in school as often and as safely as possible. It hasn't been perfect or easy. By working together with our local health officials and families, we look ahead with optimism for the second semester.

Now ten months into the pandemic, we continue to face tremendous challenges. But as I reflect on the work that is happening by our teachers, nurses, principals, counselors, food services workers, secretaries, bus drivers, and custodians on a daily basis, I feel confident that we will persevere. However, staffing our schools continues to be a challenge. Finding substitutes is difficult and sometimes impossible. We will continue to try to find substitutes for staff members on leave, but to return to more in-person learning, we may need to place individual classes on remote learning simply because there is no teacher for a specific class or even grade level to meet in person. We do not take that lightly, but know it is a reality. We have already experienced days where parents were asked to transport their children to school, because we did not have enough drivers to run all of our routes. Again, working together, we got it done.

Planning for the unknown this school year was a difficult task. Continuing to stay up-to-date on changes and new information requires time and collaboration from staff members at all levels. We have planned, made changes to our plans, and created new plans throughout the past year. Our parents have been supportive and patient, recognizing the challenges we all are trying to overcome. I think we all have a better understanding and greater respect for the roles we all play in the lives of our children.

There are a lot of lessons learned from 2020, but I am confident we will come through this stronger than ever. Whether it's the work in the classroom, extracurriculars, or social and emotional learning needs, Dover staff is troubleshooting when needed and willing to think outside the box to create opportunities for students. It's something I witness every day and am thankful for the staff and the families who make perseverance the constant even during unpredictable times.