



School District of Pickens County

Building success beyond the classroom



August 28, 2020

Dear Parent,

SDPC has learned a lot during the first week of school! We learned that many of you have spent the summer preparing your children emotionally for returning to school under new circumstances. We learned that our students have incredible capacity to adapt with a positive attitude. We learned that they are up to the challenge of responding to the protocols of a safe reopening with respect and kindness, which begins with what they have learned at home. The tone you have set with your children was our district's greatest advantage as we began this school year.

We have learned about the ability of many of our teachers to innovate, to use our shared challenges as an opportunity to teach character, build relationships, and even have fun. We have learned that our school administrators and support staff will do whatever it takes to give our students a safe environment. We were also anxious to learn how our safety plan would perform in practice once the doors of our schools opened. We've been pleased to learn that the processes for arrival and dismissal have exceeded our expectations, in some ways operating more smoothly than during a normal school year. The willingness of our students and staff to follow our safety protocols throughout the day has been encouraging.

Each school will be making minor adjustments over the first two weeks as we learn how to serve you under these new conditions. The district will be making adjustments along the way as well.

As we communicated to you last week, we are committed to being transparent about when individuals who later test positive COVID-19 may enter our schools. This week, we learned that four students and one staff member entered schools while carrying COVID-19. Their schools followed our [3-step notification process](#) so that parents would know if their child came in close contact with each case. Each Friday, we will post weekly updates about the number of positive cases and quarantines on our website, [which you can view by clicking here](#). Three out of the four students were from the same household, and the staff member had no close contacts with students. At this point we are unaware of any case of COVID-19 caused by close contact in one of our schools, but we will continue to closely monitor all students and staff who are under quarantine. Our ability to prevent our schools from becoming sources of COVID-19 spread is essential to continuing in-person learning.

The most important thing that you can do as a parent to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to keep your child home if he or she displays any of the [symptoms](#) of COVID-19. The health of our community and the education of our students depend on your cooperation.

Thank you again for your dedication to preparing students for returning to learning, whether in-person or virtual, this week. We appreciate your continued partnership as we work to end the pandemic and to once again enjoy all of the learning opportunities we have worked to build together.

Sincerely,
Danny Merck

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel B. Merck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SDPC Superintendent

Superintendent's Office

1348 Griffin Mill Road • Easley, SC 29640-6997 • P 864-397-1000 • F 864-850-5205

www.pickens.k12.sc.us