



Script of Dr. Block's December 11, 2020 Video Message

Hello Livingston Public Schools Community. This is Matt Block, Superintendent of Schools.

As Winter Break quickly approaches, we are realizing the 2020-2021 school year will soon be half-way behind us. We are most focused, however, on the half that's still ahead of us. Our schools have been open for in-person learning since September 21st, and so much hard work on the part of our staff have made so many great things happen for our students despite the unparalleled challenges. Nonetheless, recently, the number of our secondary students opting to attend in-person classes has significantly diminished. We have heard feedback, particularly at the secondary level, that some students are not seeing the value of coming to school when it is open. Conversely, parents want to see their children physically in school more often, and so do their teachers and administrators. We are told that the possibility of quarantine is a significant deterrent to physically attending school at the secondary level, and our current regional high-risk designation has magnified this even more.

We are taking steps to better understand why our students are not attending in-person classes, to reflect, and to brainstorm ways to entice our students to return to our schools. Here are some of the things that are happening currently:

- Our secondary schools are all engaging students in feedback groups to best gauge the student experience.
- We are re-examining our daily, weekly, and cohort schedules as we prepare for our return on January 19th.
- We are working with teachers to reflect and refine our instructional practices in this brand new paradigm.
- Today a form will appear in Genesis for each family in grades 6-12 to let us know their intentions for in-person instruction when we return to the hybrid model on January 19th. The completion of this form for each student is essential to guide our decision making as we look at our cohort structure for January.

Additionally, we know that the pandemic has caused uncertainty and that connection with our community and families is more important than ever. Here are some steps we are taking to connect with the community during this challenging time,

- We continue to monitor and address messages sent to us through our two district feedback email addresses; tellus@livingston.org and lpvirtual@livingston.org. This is in addition to individual conversations between administrators, teachers, and parents.
- We are looking forward to a Joint Forum with the *Board of Education* and the *Town Council* this coming **Wednesday, December 16th**. The forum will focus on Mental Health and Safety Measures put into place to mitigate the spread of the virus in our schools and community. We hope you will tune in this Wednesday night at 7pm.

- On **Friday, December 18th**, members of our leadership team and I will be meeting with our Parent Teacher Council, which includes representatives from every school's PTA, PTO, or HSA. I look forward to answering their questions, and speaking with them about all we are doing to support our students during the pandemic.
- I will be attending the Town Council Meeting next **Monday, December 21** to speak about the actions we have taken to open school, keep our schools open, and to mitigate the spread of the virus in our school facilities. I am looking forward to engaging with our town leaders on the 21st.
- We are planning a second "Chat with the Superintendent" program for this school year. The program is an open discussion providing an opportunity for questions and answers about all things Livingston Public Schools. We are currently planning to hold the program on the afternoon or evening **Thursday, January 7th**, with exact time and place to be announced soon.

As we continue to navigate these unprecedented and uncertain times, we look to strengthen our partnership with our families and community. Please be sure to fill out the form on Genesis as soon as possible, and to stay tuned as we look ahead to 2021.

Thank you.