

Kittery

School District

Truth & Knowledge

*Horace Mitchell Primary School
Shapleigh School
R.W. Traip Academy*

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April 9, 2020

Dear friends...

I'm sure you heard on the news today that Commissioner of Education, Pender Makin, issued a communication last evening that included a recommendation--supported by Governor Mills--that Maine schools remain in a **remote learning mode** for the remainder of the school year. The hope, albeit fleeting, that we may return to classroom-based instruction by re-opening our schools in May, is all but dashed.

It is difficult for me to formalize the announcement that we will not be re-opening our Kittery schools before the end of the current school year. Admittedly, my optimism was clouding the realities of the impact of Covid-19--the reality that the virus in our region of the US is just beginning to ramp up and that a return to school-based learning too soon would negate any progress that we've made by staying home. It's a bummer.

It's a bummer because for many of our students, they rely on school for stability, love, food, protection, and socializing. For many of our parents, school provides them the time to do their own work and to take care of their personal and professional needs, the needs of the elderly, and the needs of their families.

It's a bummer because our teachers and support staff entered this profession because they love children and they love interacting with children (yes, even the teenage ones!). None of us signed on to do that through Zoom or Google Meets.

Yes; a bummer for sure, but we'll do it! We'll make it! *SO FAR, SO GOOD* (as the Traip Academy sign now reads). In the weeks ahead, the Leadership Team and I will address some very difficult questions including these:

- *What will the 2020 Traip Academy Commencement look like?*
- *What will the 2020 Shapleigh School Promotional look like?*
- *What about Senior Capstone Project Presentations?*
- *How about other important culminating school events like parades and concerts?*
- *What will happen with the Traip Academy Prom?*
- *How will our 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students be effectively transitioned to Shapleigh School and Traip Academy?*
- *What if a student feels unprepared for next fall and a new grade level?*
- *Will Summer Academy be offered?*
- *What will final 'grades' look like?*

There will be others. If you have a specific question, feel free to reach out to your teachers or building principal (or me!). There is no '*Owners Manual*' for all of this; you are in luck, however. You have a team of highly motivated, creative, and thoughtful leaders in the Kittery School District who are supported by hardworking and determined teachers and support staff. And they are buoyed by you, our families, who have shown us so much love and support these past three weeks. Keep that coming!

In the wake of the Commissioner's announcement last night, it is going to be tough for me to say something funny for my Friday vlog, but I'll come up with something that is worthy of a big, collective eye-roll from my kids. That's my motivation!

Stay positive, Kittery!

Eric 

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