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Superintendent

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**Sheryl Rich**  
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May 15, 2020

RE: Letter #15 – Reflections After Nine Weeks of Remote Learning

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Happy Friday! I hope that your week has gone well. It was nice to see the sunshine a few days this week after the resurgence of snow last week. Maybe Spring has really taken hold!

I wanted to share with you some thoughts and reflections as we complete our ninth week of remote learning due to the public health crisis. During this time, we have seen and experienced how our school and the community have come together and overcome the many obstacles that have faced us during this health crisis. For example, I have seen firsthand our teachers, administrators, and other staff step up to this challenge, reinvent instructional delivery models on the fly, and work tirelessly to try to provide connection, support, and learning opportunities for the Chester Academy students. In addition, some staff have collaborated with Pinkerton Academy and the staff at two private schools to address the ongoing needs of our high school and out of district students with special needs. Parents have gone the extra mile to support their youngsters in a variety of ways. The Police and Fire Departments have worked to assist in celebrating the accomplishments and some special events of residents.

We have also seen our food service, custodians, facilities staff, and technicians come to work on a regular basis, amidst this pandemic to make sure our buildings are safe and sanitized and our most vulnerable students have access to food and technology. Throughout this pandemic, I have been honored to be a part of an outstanding group of individuals who have worked collaboratively to manage this crisis for our community. Our community has clearly stepped up to the plate and we can all be proud to be part of this community.

Our community has begun to rally around our Chester Academy Eighth Grade Class of 2020 with plans for some exciting recognition opportunities. We also look forward to celebrating the staff and students with a vehicle parade on the last day of school. While during all of these events we must follow CDC guidance and the Governor's Executive Orders, we are still excited by the possibilities being worked on.

I have observed as we have phased in remote learning that there are three groups of families: a group that is overwhelmed with what we are offering; a group that is very happy with what we are doing; and a group that feels we are not doing enough and they want more synchronous time for their children. We appreciate the many positive comments and constructive feedback that we have received from parents from all different grade levels on our

two surveys. This feedback has been very helpful as we continue to improve what we are doing. We anticipate providing a similar type survey regarding the reopening of school.

Last week was Teacher Appreciation Week, a time in our country where we show our appreciation for the work our teachers do each and every day for our students. Even more so this year, we see firsthand how important teachers are to our society. Like many of you, our staff has been struggling with family and personal challenges during this pandemic. Most are juggling their own family responsibilities, some are caring for sick members, and others are sick themselves. But, throughout all of this health crisis, they have done everything that they can do to connect with our students and help them learn in this virtual world. I hope that you and your family had an opportunity to reach out to your child's teacher with encouragement. If not, it is not too late, I urge you to do so.

No letter can be without some updates. I have a couple for you. The breakfast and lunch program will end on the last day of school. If you need further assistance with food beyond this date, contact Leanne Sullivan and she can put you in touch with some community resources. She can be reached at the school for the next two weeks. Second, we will be closing the playground/softball field to everyone beginning next week. The School Board has authorized a refurbishment project which will include adding loam and reseeding the field. The field will then be rested for the remainder of the summer. We apologize for this inconvenience.

We know that we have challenges ahead. Like any crisis, the only way that we are going to successfully navigate through this pandemic is by working together. We appreciate the work that families are doing to manage their day to day living situations and we know that everyone is stressed, tired, and concerned about when this will end and what daily life (school, work, and community events) will look like as we work our way out of this. Working together certainly eases the burden.

We are awaiting guidance from the Governor with regard to our ESY Summer Program. The NHDOE Commissioner has formed a task force to develop recommendations for School Districts to reopen in the Fall. The Chester Board and Administration will be monitoring this work. We look forward to receiving guidance and *Chesterizing* it to work in our community. This new educational world will take planning, patience, and time. We will be a better school district for all students and better prepared for any challenges that lie ahead, by all working together.

As previously mentioned, if you have questions or concerns that are not addressed in our updates, please do not hesitate to send me an email at [lockwoodd@chesteracademy.org](mailto:lockwoodd@chesteracademy.org). We will do our best to provide you with a prompt response.

Sincerely,

*Darrell J. Lockwood*

Darrell J. Lockwood, Ed.D.