

# RAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

224 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W- PO Box 564  
Ray, ND 58849

PH: 701-568-3301  
FX: 701-568-3302

Matthew Heier  
High School Principal

Benjamin L. Schafer, Superintendent  
Jennifer Skor, Business Manager

School Board:  
Paul Weyrauch, President  
Angie Kupper, V.P.  
Ryan Olson  
Rick Sigvaldsen  
Benji Foss

Bernadette Perdue  
Elementary Principal

[www.ray.k12.nd.us](http://www.ray.k12.nd.us)

July 27, 2020

Dear Families of Ray School:

Last spring was a testament to our school families and staff being willing to do whatever we need to help our kids. I cannot share enough gratitude about how everyone stepped up in that situation. Though there are still many questions that need answering, I believe we can all get on board with the school mission statement this year, "Inspiring and challenging students in an ever-changing world." Mr. Larson always said, "The only thing that doesn't change is that things change," and I think that advice is going to be helpful in our upcoming school year. We will do our best to continue the communication and collaboration that we have traditionally had with our families. As an administration and staff, we ask for your continued support and a little bit of grace, as we are faced with the many tough decisions and situations we are expecting for this year.

I want everyone to understand that sometimes at the school we have to make decisions that we may not agree with personally, due to other impacts and future implications. I can assure you that I want my own children to be in school but we will consider the safety of the whole group when making decisions. I can also tell you that it weighs on all of us heavily that we hope we are doing the right thing by trying to bring students back to the building. Some are of the mindset that bringing kids back to school is insane while others believe that keeping kids out is crazy. I can understand where all of these perspectives are coming from but again, I ask for grace as we make choices that we feel are in the best interest of a majority of our children and families. Students and staff will have the opportunity to go fully online if they are not comfortable this year. We want to do our best to accommodate as many people as possible and we hope that you can help out with just a few things.

Masks are strongly encouraged to be worn. We understand that this is a polarizing issue, however we are not making it mandatory at this point. For a high school student in a class where they can social distance, they can take it off for learning time. However, passing time in the halls, we would ask that they put it on as social distancing will be quite difficult. We will work through it with the students and so that we can promote an educationally sound and healthy environment for them to learn in. I understand there will be questions about this and many other items that can be found in our health plan, posted to our website by August 1, 2020. A draft plan was sent to each family for comment and many changes were made based on your feedback. Please continue to give us feedback throughout this process, as this school year will not look like any we have seen before.

Our building and remodel project is near completion. It is on schedule for owner training and a final punch walk prior to school beginning. The architect and the general contractor on this project have done an amazing job and come in on time and under budget. Our bathrooms have all been remodeled to be no-touch areas and we are hopeful that and other upgrades in conjunction with new cleaning protocols, will help us to make the environment as safe as possible.

We have hired a handful of staff members who will be new to Ray and we are excited to have each of them on staff. Jenna Jacob will be our new Kindergarten teacher as Mrs. Schell moves to Title I. Andrea Imes has returned to Ray School to teach our first graders along with Codie LaValle. One section of second grade will be led by Lesli Walters. Due to our larger classes moving into the middle and high school we have also added three teachers to the staff this year. Britta Peterson will be our new middle school Special Education Teacher. Chanel Fjeldahl will teach 7-12 classes in Math and Owen Owens will do the same in Science. Please help welcome our new staff and do not hesitate to introduce yourself as you are able.

I ask that you please look very closely at all of the information in this digital packet. Enclosed are Parent's Right to Know, a monthly and yearly school calendar, school and activity fees schedule, an application for free and reduced meals and much more. If you will have any difficulty making the meal payments this year, please consider applying for the Free and Reduced meals. This year the state will continue to cover a free breakfast for those that qualify for reduced price meals.

We are here to do our best to help kids do their best, no matter the situation. Ongoing communication and collaboration between home and school will be imperative as we embark on this journey together. It is often difficult to change the things that happen to us but we can control how we react to them. At the Ray School we have every intention of educating students through whatever the 2020-2021 school year brings. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you find things difficult or unclear at times and we will do our best to help or provide clarity. Our Ray School COVID-19 Response Team is working to make the start of the school year a great success. Feel free to reach out to any one of us if you have suggestions or comments on our Health and Safety or Online Learning Plans.

We will be having two virtual back to school open houses for students and staff this year as we wanted to give a chance for everyone, whether they plan to physically attend or not, to ask questions and talk through the many new adventures we will be going on this year. We ask that you watch your inbox for dates and information on the K-6 and 7-12 Open Houses. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have regarding this letter at [ben.schafer@rayschools.com](mailto:ben.schafer@rayschools.com).

Enjoy the last few weeks of summer break!  
Thank you,

Benjamin L. Schafer, Superintendent