

Dear Families of the Kalamazoo RESA Service Area,

The onset of the COVID-19 crisis in March brought with it changes to almost every aspect of our lives in a very short period of time. None of us could have anticipated what the final months of the 2019-20 school year would bring—but even so, our school districts delivered remote and virtual instruction, created instructional packets and materials, cared for the needs of students and families, and distributed food and other necessities. Not only did these past months reveal the passion and commitment of our educators, but they have given us valuable experience as we plan for what comes next.

As we look ahead to the fall and the beginning of a new school year, we now have the benefit of hindsight. Throughout the summer, the leadership of the nine local school districts of the Kalamazoo RESA (KRESA) service area have been meeting to share our experiences, learn, and plan together. We have been meeting with officials from the Department of Health and Community Services, who have provided us with substantial guidance related to ensuring the safety of our students and staff, and received the Governor's Return to School Road Map on June 30 and other guidance to assist our planning.

The nine local school districts and KRESA are creating comprehensive plans for the return to school whether our region is placed in phase three, four or five in our state's re-opening plan. The plans will reflect the educational options available to students and families in our service area, whether in person, virtual, remote or some type of hybrid option. Our plans will include Safety Protocols, Instructional Expectations, Support for Mental and Social-Emotional Health and Operational Procedures to maximize the safety and educational experiences for our students and staff during this most complicated time.

The Kalamazoo area is a true microcosm of our country. We are urban, rural and suburban and serve 35,000 kids and families of substantially different backgrounds and cultures. To meet the varying needs, our plans must be locally developed. These plans need to be approved by the governing school boards by August 15, so you will be hearing about and reading more details soon.

We appreciate your patience and communication during this most tumultuous time in our country, state, and county.

We are better together, especially in times like these.

Mr. Doug Newington

Superintendent, Climax-Scotts Community Schools

Dr. Jeffrey Thoenes

Superintendent, Comstock Public Schools

Ms. Wendy Maynard-Somers

Superintendent, Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools

Mr. Raphael Rittenhouse

Superintendent, Gull Lake Community Schools

Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri

Superintendent, Kalamazoo Public Schools

Mr. Dave Campbell

Superintendent, Kalamazoo RESA

Mr. Jason Misner

Superintendent, Parchment School District

Mr. Mark Bielang

Superintendent, Portage Public Schools

Dr. Wayne "Rusty" Stitt

Superintendent, Schoolcraft Community Schools

Mr. Keevin O'Neill

Superintendent, Vicksburg Community Schools