

## Lake Washington School District and Lake Washington Education Association Joint Press Release

February 25, 2021

Lake Washington School District jointly with the Lake Washington Education Association are releasing pertinent information and details related to secondary educational offerings for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

The District and Association have a shared agreement that secondary students need to be offered access to in-person experiences. Dr. Holmen stated, "We need to ensure that any secondary student who wants an in-person experience is afforded that opportunity." He went on to say, "Our adolescent youth are experiencing this pandemic in many different ways. We need to be responsive to those needs and be creative in how we address the varying needs across our district."

***Secondary students can expect to maintain their current remote courses and teachers for the remainder of the school year.*** After analyzing a number of factors, the District has determined that the shift to a hybrid model and disruptions to schedules would create more challenges and problems for secondary students than benefits. Superintendent Dr. Jon Holmen will release a live-recorded message for secondary families on Friday providing additional information about the decision to maintain the current remote instructional model.

Currently, the District and Association are in active negotiations related to the provision of in-person services for some secondary students. LWEA President Howard Mawhinney stated, "Health and Safety have been the LWEA's primary concern from the onset of the pandemic. Jointly, the District and the Association have dedicated significant time and resources to identify and implement the best practices possible for the key areas of ventilation, PPE, sanitation, classroom configuration, and class scheduling. We share an equal concern for student and staff emotional health and safety and have dedicated equal time and resources to address these pressing needs. That fact has been true since select students returned to in-person learning last fall. It remains true today. We look forward to continuing that good work with the District to ensure we maintain our health and safety standards going forward."

### Support Model:

When considering the in-person service needs of students, the team is developing agreements regarding a support model. This model would offer in-person services for identified students by addressing needs in a variety of areas using several different approaches:

***Academic Support:*** There are students who are struggling with the remote academic experience. By providing consistent small group academic support, we will be able to address some of the learning needs of students who are struggling, which can lead to course failure or no credit. Additionally, there will be the provision of some in-person classes that would supplant a current academic course as a means of academic support.

***Social and Emotional Support:*** There are many students who are impacted socially and emotionally due to isolation and challenges related to the pandemic. Through small groups for social and emotional support, we will be able to provide opportunities for in-person social interaction, emotional supports and, for students in need, mental health supports. These may be episodic or consistent experiences for students.

***Organizational Support:*** Some students are having a difficult time with the organization of learning in a remote instructional model. By providing small group organizational support, we will be able to address the learning needs of students and provide opportunities for consistent, in-person experiences and connection with adults and peers.

***Transition Activities:*** We know that specific groups of students, like Seniors, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 9<sup>th</sup> graders, benefit from certain experiences as they transition back to school and in-person learning. This could include activities related to grade level changes, graduation and orientation to a new campus.

### *Athletic and Activity Experiences*

The District continues to implement additional opportunities for our students in the areas of athletics and activities. High School athletes were offered athletic training opportunities starting in early January. Over 1,600 students participated in this opportunity. Clubs and activities are currently meeting remotely, and the District will soon be expanding club and activity opportunities to meet in-person. High School football officially started on February 24 with additional sports starting on March 1. Middle schools are currently developing a plan to provide intramural sports this spring.

The District and Association are committed to providing creative options to meet the social, emotional and academic needs of our secondary students. We will provide joint communications over the coming weeks with additional information including targeted timelines for implementation.

We appreciate the community's understanding during these challenging times.

**Dr. Jon Holmen**  
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### **Additional information for staff:**

We acknowledge that the uncertainties of this school year have impacted and challenged staff in a variety of ways. Unlike elementary schools, there are additional complexities related to secondary schools implementing a hybrid learning model. The significant redesigning of master schedules in our secondary schools would be too disruptive for students at this point in semester. Therefore, class rosters and building schedules will remain intact for teachers and students for the remainder of the year. Over the next few weeks, our teams will collaborate to determine the capacity of staff to deliver additional supports through an intervention model and the capacity of students/families to access these additional supports, and we will design viable intervention models that meet the needs of students.

Throughout this year, we have shared a commitment to prioritize safety, both in terms of physical safety and the emotional well-being. This commitment will continue as we collaborate on our intervention models that will keep students and staff safe. Additionally, this commitment includes ensuring that staff at increased risk are accommodated and all staff who elect to work in person can access COVID-related leave provisions already negotiated for elementary staff.

We are thankful for our educators, and we know that all staff in our secondary schools have been working very hard to meet the needs of students. Additionally, we want to thank staff who have been working in-person with some students throughout this challenging year.

Our teams continue to meet and collaboratively problem-solve the impact on working conditions that will result from the instructional models we design. As we can, we will keep staff and the community updated on our progress.

This message will be released to the community later this afternoon. Please do not post this message to social media.