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**Mary Elizabeth Davis, PhD**  
Superintendent

October 9, 2020

Henry County Schools Families,

What another remarkable week here in Henry County Schools thanks to you and the amazing partnership between students, families, teachers, and our schools during this season. I know that everything we are doing as a community feels new and unusual and even complex but I am confident that we are well on our way to new routines and more comfortable processes very quickly. I am also sure that you can agree that teachers in Henry County Schools are the best possible professionals in education today. I remain inspired by the levels to which our teachers continue to rise because of their love of the young people in our community and their commitment to making access to an education possible even during these most challenging times.

To wrap up our first week of Phase 3 of our Return to On-Campus Learning plans, our Executive Cabinet team wanted to share the following reflections:

**Family & Student Support Services Division – Dr. April Madden, Chief Officer**

The work in supporting our students and families during this first full week of on-campus learning for many of our students was on full display across our district. There was the providing of resources through community partnerships, hosting online live parent sessions for our remote learners, and celebrating our youngest learners as a part of Georgia Pre-K Week. These were just a few of the collective efforts this week, but all the work is aimed at celebrating and supporting our students and families. We know that this school year is unique, but we are excited to find extraordinary ways to meet the needs of our school community. We encourage everyone to stay tuned and connected for more resource opportunities to provide an exceptional experience for all of our students and families. Our extensive and talented group of professionals in Henry County Schools works tirelessly to support each and every child in the district, and we can't thank them enough for all they do. We hope you will join us in thanking them, too!

**School Leadership Division – Kirk Shrum, Chief Officer**

I want to take a moment to say thank you to our community members for their patience during this transition to Phase 3 of our gradual return to on-campus learning. The leaders in our schools, along with our teachers and staff members have been working hard to make learning – in-person or remote – work for all students and their families. Our principals continue to do a great job in navigating the many challenges this unique hybrid-learning environment presents. We look forward to making even greater strides over the coming weeks. A special thanks to our athletic officials and all of the student-athletes. Their commitment to adhering to the rules and procedures enacted to protect everyone has allowed our fall sports to proceed in a safe manner. It has been great to provide extracurricular opportunities for our students during this time while also allowing our community to support our schools through these meaningful activities.

### **Human Resource Services Division – Valerie Suessmith, Chief Officer**

Over the past several weeks, our school district has been committed to ensuring that our learners, whether they are remote or back on campus, have the best teachers and staff to ensure their academic growth. Our employees have been amazing in their response to teaching and supporting teaching during these unprecedented times, and we could not be more grateful for their agility and versatility in reaching students in traditional and non-traditional ways. No one went to school to learn how to teach remotely or in a hybrid environment; however, our teachers have risen to the challenge. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate the current environment to provide our students with the absolute best learning environment facilitated by the best teachers in the industry.

### **Operations Division – Josh Malcom, Chief Officer**

This week has been a busy week in Henry County Schools. From running transportation routes to ensuring our buildings are clean and safe, the Operations Division team has been hard at work providing the needed services for a smooth transition into Phase 3 of our return to on-campus learning plan. With more students returning to campus and more students electing to use district transportation, our Transportation Services Department is making the necessary adjustments as they happen to ensure a safe and timely trip to and from school. There will continue to be minor adjustments as we get back into the routine, but safety is our number one concern especially when it comes to mitigating the spread of the Coronavirus. As for our buildings, our custodians continue to utilize extensive cleaning protocols to ensure safe environments for those students and staff on campus. Their quick responses and thorough practices are making a difference for our schools. We will continue our efforts at the highest levels to ensure that we mitigate any risks in returning to our school campuses and buildings. We appreciate the support of the community in doing their part to Keep Henry Healthy.

### **Financial Services Division – Christy Willis, Chief Officer**

Our kitchens were back and operating at full capacity this week, and our elementary students once again had a full-week opportunity for great enrichment activities as a part of our afterschool program. With the completion of Phase 2 and now Phase 3, we want to thank everyone for their patience and support during this transition. We are thankful to the federal government for their support of free meals – breakfast and lunch – for every student in our district. Our school nutrition staff has done a remarkable job of providing meals to all of our on-campus learners and staff while also managing to provide nutritious meals for our at-home learners. We also want to express how great it is to have our afterschool students back with us. The staff has missed the opportunity over the past several months to provide this meaningful and supportive service for our students and families. As we continue into the month of October, please remember to complete the Free & Reduced Lunch form by the end of this month, if you think you might qualify, so that we can compile all accurate records to support and serve our students and families once we roll into the new year and the federal assistance we currently use to serve free meals ends.

### **Information Services Division – Dr. Brian Blanton, Chief Officer**

Opportunities for teaching and learning did not stop when faced with a pandemic that forced the closure of school buildings thanks to the skills and technical expertise of a vast team dedicated to our digital infrastructure and support. With the hard work of these individuals, we were able to provide our learners and our staff members with a virtual environment that meant the learning/instruction was able to continue at the highest

levels. While there were a few technical challenges along the way, our valued connections and partnerships with Google and Microsoft officials meant we were better positioned to respond quickly to enhance our user experiences. We are committed to continuing this work to get even better for every student. Our system is operating at the highest levels with our hybrid learning. We appreciate our community for their support and understanding during this time. We are grateful to our community for their support of our E-SPLOST which helped provide 1:1 technology for our students and staff.

**Learning & Performance Division – Melissa Morse, Chief Officer**

This week we were able to provide to our families what we have been preparing for since the end of last school year – a hybrid learning model with the opportunity for many of our students to be fully back on campus for in-person learning. The work has been long and hard since this has never been done before, but our teachers and staff members have risen to every challenge, and they have succeeded beyond measure. We will continue to get better in our practices and cadence in delivering instruction to our learners no matter their learning environment, and know that we stand ready to support your child and your family in any way possible to ensure their learning continues at the highest levels possible. Thank you for your partnership in making this week a success. We look forward to successfully navigating Phase 3 of our return to on-campus learning plan on our way to Phase 4. I want to thank everyone for their partnership in supporting our work!

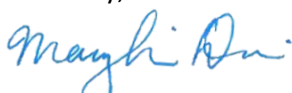
**Chief of Staff – Dr. Carl Knowlton**

It has been great to see many of our students return to campus for learning while also engaging and teaching our remote learners at the highest levels through a virtual environment. We look forward to continuing to provide a high-quality education for our students and families no matter the environment they choose to learn in, and we will continue to maintain extensive communication and connection to our stakeholders to keep them informed every step of the way. Make sure to update your Infinite Campus information any time your contact information changes so we can continue to reach you and your family with timely communication and notifications. You can find step-by-step instructions to support access to Infinite Campus on our district website.

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As I shared at the beginning, this week has been productive and successful on many different levels thanks to our partnerships. These past weeks have likely brought about thoughts of the impact of COVID-19 in our school communities. I want you to know that you can be confident that our diligence in creating responsible and safe schools along with preventing the spread of COVID-19 remains strong. We weekly report any case that impacts any school, bus, or district facility, and we continue to monitor the community impact of the coronavirus. If you would like to review this data, updated on Mondays each week, you can visit the district website by [clicking here](#). Beginning Monday, October 11, there will be an enhanced COVID-19 data tracker so that you can view impact by school, cluster, or district. If you would like to further review the protocol that has been established should there be a positive case in an HCS facility, you can find this information on our website by [clicking here](#). Have a great weekend!

Sincerely,



Mary Elizabeth Davis