

Drea O'Donnell
Superintendent
Curriculum
Director
406-373-5461

Janice Ripley
Business
Manager/Clerk
406-373-5461

Macey Ferguson
Asst.
Clerk/Activities
Clerk
406-373-5461

Shepherd School District #37

7842 Shepherd Road
PO Box 8
Shepherd, MT 59079-0008

Autumn Arlian
Elementary
Principal
406-373-5516
FAX 406-373-5076

Rich Hash
Middle School
Principal
Athletic Director
406-373-5873
FAX 406-373-5648
Kenneth Poepping
High School
Principal
406-373-5300
FAX 406-373-5342

August 25, 2020

Parents, Students and Community Members:

In July, a group of administrators and teachers met to create a plan to reopen our schools. Our utmost priority was to make sure we created a plan that had the safety of our staff and students at the forefront. The direction we were given was to create a plan at our local level and then have that plan approved by the county health department. When schools were creating plans, it was recommended we have a closure period for cleaning and disinfecting. We are now receiving different information as to what that would look like in a school setting. As things seem to change and evolve quickly with information we are receiving, we have decided to do what's best for our community locally.

The reality of having COVID-19 in our communities is real, but closing our doors each time there is a case is unrealistic. After many conversations yesterday, we have determined we are going to do what's best for our children and their educational future. We know the challenges that were put on our families on Sunday and that cannot continue to happen. Our children need to be educated and our parents need to have the comfort and reliability in knowing our schools will be open. We will not be doing a 2-day closure when we have a positive case within our system. We will be enhancing our daily cleaning operations to help with disinfecting.

I know there have been some concerns about the positive case within our district this week. Again, I would like to let you know that due to privacy laws we cannot give out names, grade levels or which building has a positive case. I would like to share a bit of information on what has taken place in the past few days. We had a concern brought to us last week. After looking at how we could have helped the situation, we started taking temperatures mid-day as well hoping we could catch things as early as possible on our end. We need to be fluid in making changes as we go and learn from each experience. In this situation, everything was followed just as it should have been. We ask that parents do their part and keep kids home who are sick. We have put together a sheet of information for you as a student and as a parent to help with what to do in case symptoms arise. Please see the attached information as a guide to symptoms and what to do if you are sick.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the building principals or myself. Please understand we still consider health and safety a priority, while we continue to educate. Continue to check our website and Facebook pages for the most up to date information for you as our families.

Sincerely,

Superintendent O'Donnell

