

First of all, thanks to all who supported the school district in the second attempt to pass a levy in April. The election failed by around 60 yes votes however the number of yes votes significantly increased from the first levy attempt in February. This is a result of the efforts of the community levy committee working tirelessly to encourage and inform our voters. The Covid19 pandemic appeared a few days after the school board voted to send the resolution to the county auditor and we were unable to cancel the levy election. So in the midst of many individuals who were not able to go to work due to the stay at home order from the state, the ballots were mailed. The levy failure resulted in job losses and program cuts or reductions that will significantly affect opportunities for students. This school district will be scheduling public forums to discuss another levy election February 2021. In the meantime, please contact your state representatives to let them know how their decisions about school funding has negatively impacted our district.

The collateral damage resulting from the Covid19 pandemic is the state stay at home order and how it has affected traditional graduation ceremonies. The safety, health and well-being of our students, staff, and their families is our top priority. The Department of Health has provided the direction for public K-12 schools to consider for graduation ceremonies. North Mason High School will be planning a drive-through event for the Class of 2020 and their immediate family members. We are proud of our graduating seniors and also recognize that the traditional graduation ceremony would have been preferable to this. However, the senior graduates that I know personally are resilient, intelligent individuals who will demonstrate that disappointment on one level will not diminish their ambition to succeed beyond high school.

Further issues due to the pandemic have been the need to create continuous learning through establishing and maintaining connections with students and their families, providing learning materials and supports using a variety of modalities (for example email, telephone, printed learning materials or available online platforms). We know internet connectivity is a barrier for many families and students and are working with public and private partners to build solutions. Our goal is to keep students at the center of plans, design learning for equity and access, and assess student learning to maintain progress.

We do not know at this time whether or not school will open in the fall in the traditional way. We have learned that everything seems to be a moving target which is unsettling and discouraging, creating the need to have several different plans in place. We are fortunate to have school leaders in our district who can be spontaneous and innovative in responding to these changing needs.

In closing, I share a quote that seems fitting during these times: "An optimist see the opportunity in every difficulty." Winston Churchill

From School Board President
Laura Boad