



# SKYLINE HIGH SCHOOL

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE



October 19, 2020

I spent a few hours today in the counseling center at Skyline High School. We have a great counseling staff who are working diligently to meet the various and diverse needs of students. They meet on a daily basis with students who are struggling for one reason or another. They meet on a schedule with students to help give guidance on course taking, required credits for graduation, progress towards graduation, ACT requirements, and college entrance, etc. In addition to all of this, they act as advocates for students with teachers, parents, and others. Counselors truly act as a fiduciary for the students over whom they have stewardship. They put the needs of their students above their own and act in the very best interest of each of their students and the various real needs they have.

While I was in the counseling center today, it was brought to the fore that our distance learners are confronting a learning experience that is much more difficult than they or we would want. As we balance the need for safety from this COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and the demands of the teaching and learning process, there is a real struggle at play that we are trying to overcome for students. Distance learning places a great deal more onus on students to be responsible for their learning. They have to be self-starters and are often alone to access the teaching and learning process on their own. This is a lot to ask of young teenagers. Still, the academic demands from the curriculum that these students need for their futures require the teachers to maintain high standards that are difficult for students to meet. I know teachers are going way out of their way to try to provide as much scaffolding as possible to support students to meet those high expectations for both in-person students and distance learners.

We have 48% of the over 2100 students that have elected to take at least one or more courses via the distance learning modality. This high percentage is remarkably higher than any other school in our district. This causes me to wonder how much the pandemic is challenging our students not only because of the virus itself but also from the impact it is having on the students as they try to learn from a distance. I want you all to know that the many professionals at Skyline High School will continue to try to provide support to all the students in both modalities to the best of our abilities. This requires a great deal of adaption and change. Teachers, administrators and counselors are working to improve their capacity to make the changes and adapt to these new teaching requirements. I do know that the teachers care a great deal about your students. The evidence is the tireless effort being made right now to accommodate students who are striving to make last minute pleas for assistance at the end of this quarter. Please, understand that we are in this together and everyone is doing more than ever before to meet the demands of the times.

It is awesome to be at a school that can provide so much individuality with as much success. The balance of meeting families' needs and their safety concerns with the demands of the curriculum are stretching us all. I hope we can band together and continue to work toward improvements.

Sincerely,  
Mitch Nerdin, Principal