



October 4, 2024

Good afternoon. Let me start by saying how proud I am to be a part of this community. To say that this past week has been hard is an understatement. Yet, as I have traveled around the county assessing the damage from the storm, I have been struck by the strength, resilience, and caring found throughout Columbia County. Our community has pulled together, steadfast in its commitment and efforts to restore basic utilities, clear homes and roadways of debris, and take care of each other.

Much progress has been made and I know we all yearn for a return to normalcy. However, we understand that many in our community are still working to address their families' basic needs. That said, we know that our schools are the hubs and hearts of our community, and that bringing our students and staff back into our buildings will play an important role in that return to normalcy that we all seek.

As this is a situation our school district and community have never faced before, we have leaned into our partnerships with local officials to help assess our readiness and guide our decisions regarding the safe return to our buildings. With that in mind, **we will hold an employee workday on Tuesday, October 8**, and are asking all employees to report to work if it is safe for them to do so. **We also are planning a two-day school week for students next week, with them attending school on Wednesday, October 9, and Thursday, October 10. Students will not attend school on Friday, October 11, as it is a scheduled Fall Break for students and District Professional Learning Day. Students and all staff will be off on Monday, October 14, for the Columbus Day Holiday.** We will reach out directly to specific communities, and share updates with our local news media, should any schools experience prolonged power outages that would affect these plans.

In the Columbia County School District, we care about our students, our employees, and this community and are committed to doing our very best during this difficult time. We know there will be challenges next week as we return to school, but we will be ready as we have the best team around... a team that is dedicated in its commitment to our students. As part of that commitment, we look forward to working with our families and community to do what is best, and what is needed, for our children. Please continue to stay safe and remain diligent in ensuring the safety and well-being of your families, loved ones, and those who may be in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Flynt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large "S" and a stylized "F".

Dr. Steven Flynt  
Superintendent