



Bethany Public School District

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Dear BCS Community,

I hope this letter finds you and yours well as you enjoy this beautiful summer weather. I know everyone has been anxiously waiting to hear about decisions for school in the fall. Just yesterday, Governor Lamont and Commissioner of Education Cardona announced the model for school reopening in fall 2020. Due to positive containment efforts in Connecticut, school districts are being directed to plan for a return to schools for full-time instruction for all students. The plan will continue to be monitored and may be adjusted if COVID infection rates change.

Detailed guidance on reopening will be shared with school districts on Monday, June 29, 2020 and we expect that there will be several additional detailed plans developed throughout the summer. Regardless, the state reopening plan for schools is grounded in six principles:

1. Safeguarding the health & safety of students and staff;
2. allowing all students the opportunity to return into the classrooms full time starting in the fall;
3. monitoring the school populations and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
4. emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities who are emerging from this historic disruption;
5. fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators, and staff; and
6. factoring into decisions about reopening the challenges to the physical safety and social-emotional well-being of our students when they are not in school.

Additionally, plans will address four main operational expectations:

- **Transportation:** Districts should plan for buses to operate close to capacity with heightened health and safety protocols, including requiring all students and operators to wear face coverings.
- **Face Coverings:** All staff and students will be expected to wear a protective face covering or face mask that completely covers the nose and mouth when inside the school building.
- **Social Distancing:** Building space should be reviewed and reconfigured to maximize social distancing.
- **Cohorting:** Students should be grouped by the same class/team of students and teachers (cohort) so each group functions independently as much as possible from other cohorts. Cohorting is strongly encouraged in elementary and middle schools and suggested, if feasible, for high school.

Bethany Public School District has created a ReOpen BCS Executive Committee composed of BCS and District administration and all department heads (Curriculum, Special Education, Human Resources, Business, Facilities, Technology, and Food Service). This committee is responsible for reviewing the guidance requirements and suggestions from the CT State Department of Education throughout the summer and charged with leading the work required to open schools in the fall. Under the direction of the Executive Committee, ReOpen BCS Subcommittees, with membership from certified and non-certified staff will serve as the second level of planners. These committees will focus on School Operations, Student and Staff Wellness, and Teaching and Learning. Ongoing consultation with local health advisors, town officials, transportation providers, PTO, Parks and Recreation, and before and after childcare providers will also be part of the planning process. Throughout the summer, parents will be provided with opportunities to share input with the ReOpen BCS Committees through surveys.

Immediately following the receipt of detailed guidance expected from the state next week, our committees will meet multiple times per week throughout the summer to complete the intensive amount of work that is required to open our doors in the Fall. I am confident that our team will be able to develop a comprehensive and responsible plan to safely bring our students back to school so that we can continue to provide them with the academic, social and emotional support they need. We will keep the community updated on a weekly basis throughout the summer as plans unfold.

As always, we thank you for your continued support as we work hard to plan for a smooth, safe, and responsible reopening of school this Fall.

Sincerely,



Colleen M. Murray
Superintendent