

July 17, 2020

Dear Community Member,

Our School Reopening Task Force continues to meet to plan for the upcoming school year. While I had not anticipated sending an update to you until next week, there were some developments in this work that I felt were important to share with you.

First, I want to assure you that we are seeking the counsel of our district physician, Dr. Louis Corsaro, in our planning efforts. Dr. Corsaro is assisting districts in our region with many aspects of the upcoming year. He is already a great support to us and I look forward to his continued guidance. Additionally, our school nurse, Mrs. Kathryn O'Hara, is a member of our Task Force and is liaising between the Department of Health and our district.

Earlier this week the New York State Department of Health released interim guidance on the reopening of schools with parameters for safe operation with students and staff on campus. As you can read, operating our schools under these parameters will necessitate significant changes. These may include, but are not limited to, the need to:

- Utilize alternative spaces in our buildings, on our campus, and in our community to facilitate instruction
- Revise our transportation procedures
- Modify our traditional schedules to accommodate a reduced number of students in our buildings

You can access this document here:

[Interim Guidance for In-person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

Governor Cuomo also announced this week that he will be basing the decision on whether to reopen schools on a series of metrics for the rate of community spread of the coronavirus. More information can be found here:

[Governor Cuomo Announces New Data-Driven Guidance for Reopening Schools](#)

What does this all mean for Haldane? If the transmission of coronavirus in our community remains at current levels, our schools will be able to reopen. However, the parameters established by the Department of Health will likely limit the number of students we can have on campus each day. In preparation for this, the district leadership team is considering how we can safely bring as many students and staff on campus each day as possible. I have asked our administrators to consider the following parameters as part of this work:

- Develop a schedule which allows for our youngest students and more vulnerable populations to physically attend school more frequently, and establish a rotation for remaining students to physically attend school *and* engage in virtual learning.
- As additional spaces are identified, “scale up” or “phase in” more grade levels and/or student cohorts to physically attend school each day.
- Maintain, to the extent possible, Haldane’s diverse array of course offerings and extracurricular activities.

This continues to be a dynamic situation with additional guidance expected over the next two weeks. I anticipate being able to share Haldane’s specific plan for the 2020-2021 school year in early August. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact either me or your child’s building principal if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Phil Benante, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools