

School Will Start Remotely on September 14

We plan to open school remotely and then transition to a hybrid format that combines classroom and remote learning. We will do so in phases:

- The first phase, beginning September 1, will be dedicated to teacher training in such areas as Canvas, the new learning management system; techniques for improved hybrid learning; effective uses of aides in remote schooling, and practices to address trauma induced by the pandemic or racism.
- All students will begin remote instruction on September 14.
- Students needing the most acclimatization and teacher support will begin in-classroom instruction first. Thus, children in preschool through Grade 5, as well as pupils in the autism program and those with learning or multiple disabilities, will begin in the classroom on October 12.
- Finally, as of October 19, students through high school will attend in the classroom.

With the exception of preschool, which we expect will run four days a week in the classroom, each grade level will be divided into three cohorts. One cohort will take instruction remotely only. The other two will participate in both classroom and online instruction:

- Kindergarten through Grade 5 will attend in the classroom two days a week and virtually three days. Cohort A will attend in the classroom Monday and Tuesday; Cohort B, Thursday and Friday.
- In middle school and high school, students will attend in the classroom for four days, then six days virtually. Cohort A will attend in the classroom Monday through Thursday one week; Cohort B, the next week.
- All students in all grades will depart the classroom at 1 p.m. The remainder of their instruction on any given day will be virtual.

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This timing reflects a delay from our initial plan, which would have begun in-classroom instruction for pre-K through Grade 1 on September 14. In order to pursue instruction in our school buildings, we must first meet two criteria:

- We will need to ensure that we have sufficient teachers with the correct certifications on site to run the programs in the classrooms. In addition to a survey of teachers, we are discussing teachers' plans with them individually, grade by grade.
- We must ensure that the planned installation of new air filtration units in the school buildings is complete and that the units are functioning effectively. These units are expected to significantly improve filtration, by 4 to 5 MERV levels in each building.

We believe that Canvas will significantly improve the virtual learning process. Canvas is a highly reliable platform, with up-time above 99 percent. It consolidates all student learning into a single platform, and it integrates seamlessly with Google and Microsoft applications. Canvas will be paired with hardware investments: iPads for pre-K through 1st grade, Chromebooks for 2nd through 5th grade, and MacBook Air for middle school and high school students.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, our staffs have been working hard to get ready for the new school year. We are very excited to begin welcoming our students back to school, both virtually and in the classroom.

Remote Education—Fact Sheet August 19 2020

The Princeton Public School System is **well prepared** to provide a robust educational experience remotely. Unlike last March, when the switch to remote learning was abrupt and unexpected, we have been preparing for this situation for the past five months.

We will provide as seamless an experience as possible—our teachers are well versed in the practices and resources required to **meet the academic, physical, and social-emotional needs of** students. They will be paying particular attention to changes in students' behavior and attitudes which might indicate the student is distressed, and will reach out to parents with guidance regarding helpful resources when appropriate.

We've designed our plan to **align our students' education as closely as possible to that which they would experience in the classroom**, while bearing in mind that the remote environment presents unique challenges.

Teachers will assess and grade students as they would normally while being flexible, within reason, regarding deadlines. And because there is no way to prevent students from consulting textbooks and other reference sources, teachers will design quizzes, tests, and projects that invite critical thinking, creativity, and informed opinions rather than just recall.

If a student is unable to participate in remote learning because of illness, parents should report that to the school secretary via e-mail. In addition to the standard reasons for an excused absence, **a Covid-related illness, parent work schedule, or child-care issue within the student's household** will also be acceptable reasons.

All students will have access to the technology they need for online learning. We are providing an appropriate device for students in all grades, from Pre-K through grade 12. Our new **Cloud-based Learning Management System, called Canvas, provides a platform for assignments, updates, learning agendas, and other critical information**. Everything will be in one place, so students, teachers, and parents need only navigate one system. There are videos and a tutorial on our web site by Friday.

Students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) will **continue to receive the services specified in their plans**. Speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and English-as-a-Second-Language services will also be provided. To the extent possible, and when parents agree, students may be offered the opportunity to receive occupational therapy or physical therapy in-person at one of the schools. Case managers and supervisors will work with parents to arrange services.

We are **committed to supporting our students and their families** in every way we can, so please don't hesitate to reach out to teachers and school officials with questions or concerns.