

**06/24/2020**

**From:** Alan Addley <dps@darienps.org>

**Subject:** Message from the Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents,

As we transition into summer, plans for reopening school in the fall are well underway. As you know, the *District Reopening Schools Task Force* has been hard at work planning for a variety of reopening scenarios. Thank you for completing their recent parent survey. Your feedback is helpful in shaping our reopening plans. After the upcoming holiday we will establish a few parent focus groups to provide feedback on the recommendations of the *Task Force*.

Earlier today, the Governor and Commissioner of Education shared the requirements and recommendations for reopening schools in the fall. The guidance reflects Connecticut's successful mitigation efforts of slowing the spread of the Coronavirus. Any significant changes in virus prevalence may result in adjustments to these initial guidelines.

District plans must anticipate all students returning to school every day with mitigating health and safety strategies. A safe return to school for students and staff is the top priority. Hence, the guidelines for reopening require maximizing social distancing, regular hand-washing, enhanced cleaning, and consistent wearing of mouth and nose face masks for students and staff. School buses will operate at close to capacity ridership with heightened cleaning protocols and the requirement for face masks. The grouping of students by the same class and teacher (into a cohort) is strongly encouraged for grades PK-8 and encouraged where feasible for grades 9-12. Specific plans for creating and adhering to these guidelines is the District's responsibility. *The District Reopening Plan* will be developed over the next several weeks with a final plan due to the state by July 24th.

While there is a high level of District autonomy with reopening plans, there will be clear guidance in managing the health and safety of students and staff should cases of the virus arise within schools. Plans must all anticipate the possibility of the school returning to some version of remote learning and provide remote

learning experiences should families decide their child(ren) will not return to school in the fall.

Additional details and guidance from the state is expected next Monday afternoon. We are hopeful that unanswered questions will be addressed so that plans can be finalized for a safe reopening that engages all learners at the highest level possible.

Today's guidance from the state and their full report that we will receive on Monday will [continue](#) to shape the work of the *Task Force* as it develops recommendations for *Communication, Teaching and Learning, Special Education, Operations, and Health and Wellness*. These recommendations will be finalized by July 10th and will serve to shape the final *District Reopening Plan*.

You will receive additional updates from the District on July 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime, we hope you can begin to make some summer memories with families and friends.

Sincerely,

*Alan*

