

7/24/2020

From: Alan Addley <dps@darienps.org>

Subject: Message from the Superintendent of Schools

Dear Families:

Good evening, I trust this finds you and your family well and that you are experiencing some vacation activities in a very unusual summer. I am pleased to share with you *Darien's Reopening Plan* for schools in the fall of 2020. You may access it by [clicking here](#).

Roosevelt once said, "You must do the things you think you cannot do." In true Darien tradition, the school community has risen to the enormous challenges presented by this pandemic health crisis in preparing for our students to return to schooling in the fall. In doing so we have embraced the qualities of resilience, nimbleness, excellence and innovative thinking. The design of the plan and schedules enables the District to transition seamlessly between the three different learning models required by the State.

The health pandemic crisis that we are facing continues to be a fluid situation and it is very likely that direction from the State and aspects of the District's reopening plan will continue to change before students return to school. Some details of the enclosed plan will continue to be developed and finalized over the next month.

The District plan must comply with the Connecticut State Department of Education's reopening plan: *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together*, that requires districts to plan for the following three learning models:

In Person Return: Students physically return to school five (5) days a week following health and safety guidelines. This model provides an elective opt out provision for students to be provided with remote learning experiences instead of attending school.

Hybrid Return: Students engage in a combination of in-person and remote elearning experiences

Remote Learning Return: Students are not physically present but learn through synchronous and asynchronous eLearning experiences using a virtual platform

Currently, it is the State's expectation that all Districts will start with the *In Person Model*. When and how a district moves between models is determined by the degree of virus spread and transmission of COVID-19 and will be made with advice from the CT State Department of Public Health and in consultation with local health officials.

The District's plan to reopen schools is the product of the hard work and recommendations from the *District Reopening Task Force*, feedback from staff and parents, advice from legal counsel, and input from our health professionals, the town's Health Director, and the District's Medical Advisor.

Thank you to the staff and parents for their countless hours of dedicated work in developing this comprehensive plan. Decisions were made in the best interest of all students with the priority of ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. The plan reflects a collaborative effort to meet the current requirements and guidance from the State while providing the safest, personalized and highest quality educational experience possible. Feedback from all constituents proved extremely helpful and is reflected throughout the plan.

Schools in the fall will undoubtedly look and feel different. With your partnership and assistance along with the care and dedication of our staff, our students, as always, will rise to the occasion and quickly adapt to their new environments. The start of any school year is always a special time filled with excitement and nervous anticipation but even more so this year. Know the staff will be professionally ready to welcome your children back with love, hope, confidence and solid preparation.

Thank you for your participation thus far and for your continued support as we prepare for the safe return to school for our students and staff.

Have a nice weekend,

Sincerely,

Alan

Superintendent of Schools

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