



Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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A National Blue Ribbon District of Excellence

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Dear Hastings Families,

Today, school districts across New York received information from the New York State Education Department regarding guidance for reopening schools in September. This will provide an overview of the status and our District's planning to date. Last week, Governor Cuomo informed districts that the due date for the submission of the school reopening plan is now July 31, 2020. However, the Governor will make his decision about whether or not schools will reopen sometime during the week of August 3-7, 2020.

In two previous community updates, I have referenced the work of our school reopening committee and other regional collaborations. Our school reopening planning committee has been meeting regularly with a focus on the following areas: instruction & technology; facilities, physical re-entry, and safety & security; transportation, food services, and business; medical; mental health & wellness; and athletics, physical education & health, and co-curriculars. The members of the committee are listed [here](#). The members of the larger committee were divided into subcommittees which are listed [here](#). Both the full committee and subcommittees continue to meet and will do so until our re-entry plan is completed, submitted, and approved by the New York State Education Department.

Several important guidance documents were shared with districts today that our reopening committee will be reviewing so that this guidance information is reflected in our plan. The [NYSED Recovering, Rebuilding and Renewing: the Spirit of New York School's Reopening Guidance](#) and the [NYS Department of Health Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#) are provided here for your convenience.

The objectives of our school reopening committee are to plan for the safety of our students and district employees, prepare for three models of schooling as requested by the State (full in-person instruction; reduced student population in buildings or hybrid; and full remote instruction), and prepare for the best and the worst-case scenarios. To this end, a short survey about your plans to send your child (ren) to school in September and the use of transportation provided for children attending Hillside Elementary School is important information for us. Please complete this [survey](#).

Some parents in the community have also begun asking questions about homeschooling outside and instead of any distance learning the district may be providing next year. Melissa Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, approves Individualized Home Instruction Plans (IHIP) which are a requirement for homeschooling. The process is described on the New York State Education Department website which is [here](#).

It is important that districts in this region develop plans that are similar where possible. Superintendents in the Southern Westchester and the Rivertown Districts meet regularly to collaborate on how to achieve this objective. In addition, the Superintendents work closely with the Southern Westchester BOCES Superintendent who meets weekly with the New York State Education Department.

The Altaris Consulting Group, LLC works with us and a number of districts in the region on safety, security, and school reopening. Their recommendations are critical since our safety and security plan will overlap with our reopening plan. We will develop a comprehensive and thoughtful school re-entry plan that follows the guidance provided by New York State and considers the needs of families, home and work.

Updates will be shared with you and this information will be placed on our website in one location. We know that families are anxious to know what will be different when schools reopen. As I explained to the reopening committee last week, agility and flexibility will be essential for our teachers and staff, and I assure you that we will do our best to make certain that when our doors reopen in September, children and adults alike will be safe and supported as we transition back into our routines associated with teaching and learning.

Sincerely,

Valerie Henning-Piedmonte, Ed.D.