



Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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A National Blue Ribbon District of Excellence

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Business Official & Treasurer

August 7, 2020

Dear Hastings Community,

This afternoon, Governor Cuomo announced that schools may reopen as described in their school reopening plan submitted on July 31, 2020. While the Governor is not asking that districts change their models, he is asking us to make a decision on the following: reopen in the hybrid model outlined in the plan, reopen in the full virtual model where all children will learn from home, or reopen with all children learning on campus. The latter model, in our school buildings, is not feasible for us because we are not able to maintain social distancing of six feet in our schools at full student capacity. We will determine the best way to enlist community feedback on this decision of the hybrid model or full virtual model.

The Governor also directed districts to convene three public discussions, by August 21, for the purpose of communicating the school reopening plan to families, teachers and staff, and other members of the community and answer questions. In addition, one session must be provided separately for teachers and staff to review the reopening plan, answer questions, and state concerns. We have already held opportunities in July, and have scheduled opportunities in the coming weeks for the community and faculty and staff to ask questions and share concerns about our plan.

Our District conducted its first Community Forum on our school reopening plan on July 21, a Superintendent & PTSA/SEPTA Chat on the school reopening plan on July 28 and a Faculty and Staff Forum on instruction and learning on August 3. In addition, these are the other forums that have been scheduled:

- Faculty and Staff Forum on School Reopening #2, Monday, August 10, 3:00pm-4:30pm
- Community Forum on School Reopening #2, Tuesday, August 11, 4:30pm-6:30pm
- Superintendent & PTSA/SEPTA Chat on School Reopening #2, Wednesday, August 12, 3:30pm-4:30pm
- Faculty and Staff Forum on School Reopening #3, Tuesday, August 18, 3:30pm-5:00pm
- Special Education School Reopening Forum, Thursday, August 20, 4:30pm-5:30pm
- Hillside Elementary School Reopening Forum, Friday, August 21, 10:00am-11:30am
- Hastings High School Reopening Forum, Friday, August 21, 12:00pm-1:30pm

- Farragut Middle School Reopening Forum, Friday, August 21, 2:00pm-3:30pm

We will use Zoom webinar, which has a capacity of 500 participants. Information about how to access these forums has already been shared and is listed on our website. This information will be shared again in the upcoming Hastings Happenings. We will also record each forum for those unable to attend and upload the recording to our website. In addition to the forums and chats, we will continue to update our [School Reopening FAQ](#) document on our website.

The Governor's objective is clearly to ensure that districts provide an opportunity for families, teachers, and staff, and other members of the community to fully understand our school reopening plan and how remote learning will be provided. Starting in March, Melissa Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, has continued to work with teachers and administrators on ways to develop engaging and consistent practices associated with remote learning.

The Governor also expects that districts post details on their websites about three specific components of the school reopening plan so that this information is more easily accessible:

- How we plan on conducting health screenings for students and teachers;
- How we will conduct contact tracing if someone tests positive; and,
- How we will conduct remote learning.

Feedback from the community and teachers and staff about our school reopening plan has expressed myriad opinions and concerns that we have attempted to address. In addition, survey results from families and faculty and staff about which hybrid model is preferred is [here](#). We make every effort to clarify points through email, phone calls, and videoconferences. The forums provide another chance to reexamine and solidify components of our plan before September 8, the first day of school.

While we know that questions and suggestions are made in the spirit of care for children and District staff, we feel confident that from the outset, our intent was to involve as many stakeholders as possible to develop the safest possible plan that would allow us to reopen our schools.

If you have any questions or concerns that have not been addressed, please feel free to contact the administrator of your child's school, Melissa Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Maureen Caraballo, Business Official; Joseph Martorana, Director of Facilities, or me.

Warm regards,

Valerie Henning-Piedmonte