

Dear Preston Learning Community,

We know you are out there, hopefully, enjoying the heat of summer in some approximately social distancing way. We know that you hear national and state dialogue along with local debate from many directions. The message below is a modest attempt to share what we know and remind everyone about what our general plans are for the next month. *We continue to state that this is a fluid and dynamic circumstance, so our plans may change.*

This new update is based on work and information that has occurred over the last few weeks. Thank you again for all of your effort and support as we manage these challenging times.

Our priorities remain: (1) Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff; (2) Allowing ALL students the opportunity to return to school FULL time starting August 31, 2020; (3) Monitoring the school, student, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to contain COVID-19 spread appropriately; (4) Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities; (5) Fostering strong two-way communication with families, educators, and staff, and (6) Factoring into decisions about reopening the challenges to the physical safety, social-emotional wellbeing, and the mental health needs of our students.

In Preston, our number one priority is safety and wellbeing and the important trusting relationship between the teacher and the student.

- We sincerely thank all the students and families of Preston for their resilience, their involvement, and their heartfelt, continued support. Keep on talking and sharing your views with us.
- We have agreed to align our work with other school districts in the LEARN Regional Collaborative, which includes 21 surrounding communities to reduce conflicting messages.
- We are creating a plan that will be **Evergreen** – continuously updated to reflect the fluid and dynamic circumstances in which we find ourselves.
- Our plan will be cleared by our local health authority.
- Communication from the Principal's offices and the Superintendent's office will increase to once a week at a minimum starting this Friday will the submission of the state plan.
 - We recognize the continuous, shifting, and often contradictory flow of news as well as individual circumstances and concerns that help frame the challenge of school reopening. We will keep all of these in mind as we move forward.
 - We also recognize that there is much misinformation in the broader media, so all of our health information will be vetted directly from our local Health Department contact. For example, the current infection rate for eastern Connecticut is under 1%. Based on the governor's messaging, if the infection rates rise to 5%, he will consider further actions related to school openings.
 - The district has several teams in place that have developed a response to the state guidelines, including a Reopening Team, a Social-Emotional Learning Team, a Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development Team, a district leadership team, a district safety team, and of course, the Board of Education.
 - Preston will offer three safety options for instruction, and we will be prepared to pivot based on health care priorities:

- **Full Face-to-Face** schooling with social distancing and cleaning priorities in place.
 - **Hybrid Model** which will combine face-to-face with virtual instruction in a reduced student number format. All of the LEARN Collaborative members will follow a similar hybrid model.
 - **Full Virtual Instruction**, which will include improved instructional designs and student engagement strategies.
 - We are developing a response for students who chose not to participate in the district learning plan. More details to follow.
- We will use the information gathered from the recent parent, staff, and student surveys, as well as the independent input shared by parents, staff, and community members along with future engagement strategies to help frame our response to the state guidelines and local priorities.
 - **We continue to be aware that this is a dynamic and fluid situation that could change at a moment's notice (Pivot). A draft of our district plan will be submitted by July 24, 2020, and then posted on our webpage.**
 - **After the Plan is submitted, we will continue to increase the communication process to share thoughts, insights, concerns, solutions.**

Our focus remains a safe return to school full time for students starting with a half-day on Monday, August 31, 2020.

Please monitor Facebook, email, text, and our webpage for further updates. Please contact the Superintendent's office or your building principals with any questions or concerns.

Be safe, healthy, and remain engaged! Thank you.

Roy M. Seitsinger, Jr., Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools