

July 24, 2020

Dear Island Park Families,

We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy!

Over the past week, the District's Reopening Task Force Committees and Board of Education have been working tirelessly on developing a reopening plan that is in compliance with guidelines and guidance from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). In order for us to meet the mandatory requirements provided by the NYSDOH and NYSED, the 2020-2021 school year will be very different from what our students, families, teachers, and staff have grown accustomed to. Below are a few of the changes that our students, faculty, and staff should expect as we return to school for in-person instruction:

- completing a mandatory daily at-home (prior to coming to school) health screening
- social distancing (6 feet of separation between individuals at all times) in classrooms, corridors and school buses
- wearing face coverings on the bus and throughout the day (they will be removed when eating)
- limited movement throughout the school building

In preparation for our return to in-person instruction, the District has been busy reimagining each classroom space to comply with mandatory social distancing protocols, planning transportation routes with social distancing protocols and procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) including but not limited to face coverings, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and sanitizing equipment.

The District continues to examine three (3) distinct operational approaches:

- All-In School Model with students attending daily for in-person learning in their respective school building
- Hybrid Model (a combination of in-person and distance learning/remote instruction)
- Remote Only Model (schools are closed for in-person learning by Executive Order)

Throughout this process, our focus continues to be concentrated on the ability to have our students, faculty and staff safely return to their school building in-person every single day. The All-In School Model with students coming to their school building everyday requires that the District divide each class in half for mandatory 6-foot social distancing. This requires additional teachers, monitors and security aides currently not staffed for the 2020-2021 school year.

Organizing the Hybrid Model provides for a combination of in-person and remote instruction and allows the District to overcome many of the biggest hurdles to reopening our schools, which include:

- double the staff for double the classes
- stress on the system, including closing of school in the event of teacher/staff absence
- limited movement by students in the building resulting from the large number of students who must be social distanced
- complications with busing that require numerous runs at many staggered times due to the social distancing mandate

In this Hybrid Model, Distance/Remote Learning would be structured very differently when compared with the spring 2020 school closure model. In the Hybrid Model, some students attend school in-person, while other students attend remotely. Students in a remote setting would follow a daily schedule and will be engaged in “live teaching” (synchronous) and independent (asynchronous) learning on the days they are not in the school building. When students attend class remotely, they would participate in classroom instruction with their teacher(s) and peers through the use of Google Meet and Goggle Classroom. In this revamped model, the increased access to live teaching (synchronous) experiences reduces the family burden to support student learning at home.

Over the course of the next week, we have scheduled additional meetings with our teachers, administrators, staff, and parents to finalize our plan. More detailed information regarding our reopening plan will be included in my letter to the community on July 31, 2020 and at the Special Business Meeting of the Board of Education on Monday, August 3, 2020 at 6:30 PM via WebEx. In the interim, we welcome your questions via webmaster@islandparkschools.org. Please continue to monitor the District’s website and Facebook page, to stay abreast of all updates.

Fondly,

Vincent Randazzo
Assistant Superintendent

