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# POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL

599 Bedford Road • Sleepy Hollow, N.Y. 10591 • 914-631-2440 • fax 914-631-3280 • [www.pocanticohills.org](http://www.pocanticohills.org)

July 18, 2020

Happy Saturday Pocantico!

It is a wonderful, if a little warm, day. Good thing we have a pool!

We have finally received our much-anticipated guidance documents (attached below) and associated tasks from the New York State Education Department and the Department of Health. Additionally, the Governor has provided all schools with a COVID-19 basics for back-to-school. This criteria, which is regionally specific, provides the following guidelines for re-opening:

- Our region, of which we are Mid-Hudson, must be in Phase 4 of the state's economic reopening guidelines to allow full attendance. Currently, we are in Phase 4.
- Our region needs to have a daily infection rate that remains at 5% or lower over a 14-day average. Yesterday, according to the regional dashboard (attached), we were at .8%.
- The Governor has stated that he will announce each region's ability to open schools during the first week of August.
- Schools will not be allowed to open or will close, if after August 1<sup>st</sup> a regional infection rate is greater than 9% utilizing a seven-day average.

All school districts must develop and submit their re-opening plans by July 31. These plans must follow the guidelines provided by both NYSED and the NYSDOH. Key considerations are:

- Social distancing
- The use of face coverings
- Daily wellness screenings of students, staff, and visitors
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing routine and density reduction approaches for lunch, hallway usage, etc. The link to the 24-page DOH document is below.

Utilizing these general guidelines, schools have been asked to develop three instructional models:

- 1) Full return of all students to school buildings with social distancing when feasible and masks worn by students and staff.
- 2) Hybrid model(s) of in-person and remote/eLearning that utilizes a density reduction approach and PPE protocols.
- 3) Remote/eLearning model during rolling outbreaks of COVID-19. This model will include daily schedules and live interaction.

On Wednesday, NYSED provided us with a 145-page guidance document to help guide this work. So, what does this all mean? To me, the general principles are simple. First and foremost is our commitment to the health, safety and mental well-being of our students, staff members and community.

Second, please refer to the first point. I truly believe that if we keep these thoughts as our guiding principles that the rest will, with work and commitment, fall into place.

To help us with this work, we have developed and are finalizing a series of committee teams, based upon these guidance documents. As an example, our facilities team has been meeting throughout this crisis to determine the most effective cleaning protocols, safety measures and equipment to help provide a safe environment. HEPA filtration measures, ionization air cleaning and the utilization of specific UVC equipment are a sample of some of the solutions that we are incorporating to ensure a protected learning environment.

Thank you to everyone who has been able to complete the return to school survey and for the many expressions of support and offers of help. As our plans continue to develop, we will keep you all as fully informed as possible.

Our best regards,  
Rich, Adam, Don and Team POCO

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/RegionalCouncilMap.pdf>

<https://forward.ny.gov/percentage-positive-results-region-dashboard>

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools MasterGuidance.pdf>

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening-schools/nys-p12-school-reopening-guidance.pdf>

