



REGION 15 SCHOOLS 2020-21 REOPENING INFORMATION

WWW.REGION15.ORG/SCHOOLREOPENING
SCHOOLREOPENING@REGION15.ORG

August 15, 2020

Dear Region 15 Parents, Guardians and Staff,

We have been working tirelessly to prepare for our schools to safely reopen and we are ready. However it is important to remember that all our plans will be contingent on the realities at the end of August and may be modified based on evaluations of district resources, capabilities, and the health conditions of our communities.

No matter what 2020 brings: Your partnership is invaluable.

Communication:

We understand there is a significant amount of information provided and that it is frequently updated - we will do our part to continue to share information with you and we ask you to be an informed school community member and read/watch the emails, documents, and information posted on our website. If you have any questions please email, SchoolReopening@Region15.org. We apologize for any delays in our email response time.

Added to the website this week:

- **SURVEY:** To welcome our students to the upcoming school year, we ask that all families indicate how their child will be participating in school in September by completing the following survey by **Monday, August 17th at 4:00pm**.

[2020-21 School Year Survey regarding sending your child\(ren\) back to school](#)

*Updated Pomperaug High School Plan is below

**Please complete a separate survey for each child enrolled in Region 15 schools

- [8/10/20 BOE Meeting Video - School Reopening Information](#) and [Presentation of School Reopening Plans](#)
- [8/12/20 Public Question and Answer Webinar](#)
- [2020-21 School Year Calendar](#): Revised to include half days Sept 1-4; First Day of School is September 1 for Preschool and Grades 1-12; Kindergarten First Day is September 2.
- [Preschool Information](#)
- [Addendum 5: Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts](#): This document addresses issues when a student or staff person has or develops: possible signs and symptoms of COVID-19; a diagnosis of COVID-19; or exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. It describes immediate actions for removing an individual from the school setting and when to safely return them to school. ***It is critical that families understand and plan for this potential scenario.***
- [Addendum 6: Reopening Guidance for Education Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Weekly update of indicators of COVID-19 community spread for schools \(Updated 8/13/20\)](#)

SCHOOL REOPENING PLANS:

Important change to the Pomperaug High School (PHS) Plans: At this time PHS *only* will open under a *Social Distancing Hybrid Model*. The Connecticut State Department of Education's Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together, only provided guidelines for the development of a plan based on community infection rates and did NOT address plans for models based on student density and the structural limitations of our buildings. As we continuously evaluate our situations and recognize that PHS is our most densely populated building, we have opted to institute a Social Distancing Hybrid Model, a different hybrid schedule based on population density and established cohorts. The space and enrollment at our other schools does not present the same challenge. This schedule was referenced as a possibility earlier this week at the Board of Education meeting.

- The variables to develop this schedule are “fixed” conditions and may not allow for a move to “In-Person”
- We have now received the community survey data and results indicate that most of our students are opting to join us in person.
- We are excited to welcome students back and feel that in person education is best for students, however we want to make sure we take all steps necessary to allow for distancing.
- In addition, the CIAC has now suspended all athletic activities while it reviews the recommendations of the CT Department of Health regarding not playing certain sports.
- The amount of students at PHS combined with the facility constraints makes creating appropriately social distance learning spaces extremely difficult.
- As a result, PHS will need to start in the Social Distance Hybrid schedule referenced as a possibility earlier this week at the Board of Education meeting.
- High school parents will receive additional specifics later today. We will review this over the first month of school and reevaluate on October 1st.
- As a result of going to this hybrid model we will be able to allow for more parking spots to students at least for the first month of school.

Region 15 Schools will begin the 2020-21 school year with options for families that can be reviewed in the [Presentation of School Reopening Plans](#).

***In-Person Learning for 5 days per week (Elementary and Middle Schools)
Hybrid Schedule for Social Distancing (Pomperaug High School)***

OR

Voluntary Remote Distance Learning.

- [A comparison chart of the options is available here.](#)

MOVING FORWARD

- Our Reopening Our Schools committee and district administrators continue to take guidance from the State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Control to best support the health and safety of our students and employees. At this time, it is our local health departments, not the school district, who will make decisions regarding protocols for responding to specific COVID-19 scenarios that may occur within our school community. If you are in a situation that requires monitoring for COVID-19, you may receive communication via Region 15 with instructions from our local health departments as they do not have the communication tools we have access to.
- Bus Cohorts: We expect to notify families next week of both your regular bus route and your cohort for PHS students or should the district need to move to Phase 2 of our reopening plan for other schools.
- Athletics: Currently the CIAC has delayed the start of all sports until further review by the State Department of Public Health. This is a very active topic of discussion and I expect more information will be released next week.

I understand the uncertainty of the circumstances, but am confident that all our plans prioritize the safety and education of our students and staff, and that ***if it is necessary our plans will be adjusted.***

We cannot emphasize enough the need to have contingency plans. We are in a very fluid environment and changes will occur. Our Region 15 community is prepared to begin the 2020-21 school year and we are looking forward to welcoming you.

Reopening our Schools 2020: We are Connected. We are Prepared. We are Region 15!

If you have read to this point, I thank you for your partnership and for being informed. I understand there is a lot to digest and this is a very complex time.

Please share what you know about our reopening plan.

Joshua Smith
Superintendent
Region 15 Public Schools