



REGION 15 SCHOOLS 2020-21 REOPENING INFORMATION

WWW.REGION15.ORG/SCHOOLREOPENING
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September 13, 2020

Dear Region 15 Parents, Guardians and Staff,

As we finish the second week of school for the 2020-21 school year, I am continuously reminded of all the reasons that make our Region 15 family a community: our student's positive energy, the support of our staff, and the coordinated efforts of everyone involved to make school a positive experience this Fall.

Our first weeks of the school year have focused on making adjustments to what needed to be done to make our schools "run", and we are now positioned to shift our focus to student instruction. Embedded in this is an intentional focus on student and teacher connectedness and learning how to use technology effectively for students who are both in the classroom and in remote learning environments.

We understand that there will be continuous adjustments to everything we do and our thinking is always shaped from a practical perspective of keeping our community safe and what is in the best interest of our students.

COVID Response Flow Chart:

As part of our Reopening Schools plan, we are employing mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of infection and are continuing to meet weekly with public health directors as well as area superintendents. As some of the districts around us have individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, should a case be received here, this is what you can expect regarding decisions and communications.

[Pomperaug Department of Public Health COVID Response Flow Chart](#)

Addendums related to COVID Response from the [State Dept of Ed Reopening Guide: Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#)

- [Addendum 5: Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts](#)
- [Addendum 9: Contact Tracing Scenarios in Schools](#)

Contact tracing is done in concert with the school district and Departments of Public Health, and our ability to contact trace is the driving force behind decisions made for school closures and notifications to students, families, and staff regarding the need to quarantine. Dependent on the circumstance, it may be necessary to close a school for a day or two while contact tracing is completed. In every scenario, multiple factors will be considered and the response to each situation will be unique.

In the event of a positive COVID-19 test result, Region 15 will not be sharing individual names or other identifying information in our communications. We encourage you to cooperate fully with the school district and Departments of Public Health.

Technology and Chromebooks:

It is our intent for every Region 15 student to be provided with a school issued chromebook, which will allow for consistent management of software, increase our ability to troubleshoot issues for remote learners, and simplify how to access different programs. This week alone, we were able to turn over and distribute over 650 chromebooks to students. As additional chromebook shipments arrive, we will continue to provide them to students.

As we are relying on technology in all instructional models, it is expected that we are going to experience technical difficulties. Many of these situations are outside of our control and as we make adjustments we appreciate your patience and understanding, as often our teachers do not have the time, opportunity, or expertise to troubleshoot problems when they occur during the class period. In these situations we will work to catch up students on what they have missed or we may ask you to schedule a time to troubleshoot technical issues. Once our deliveries arrive, all students will receive a chromebook. We are listening to our students and staff on the technical adjustments that are needed and will continue to add technology as resources allow.

Cohort Information:

Later this afternoon the updated cohort information for students in elementary and middle school will be sent via email. All family members should now be in the same cohort. If you need to request a change, they will be reviewed on a case by case basis. We ask that you do your best to accommodate the cohort provided as too many adjustments could disrupt the intent. If you must request a change, you will be able to do so through your child's school. Should any change be granted, the district will not be able to provide transportation.

Food Services in Region 15:

Recently, the USDA released nationwide waivers to extend flexibilities for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) through December 31, 2020. Therefore, effective Monday, September 14th, Region 15 will be offering universal free lunch to all students in grades Pre- Kindergarten through 12. Please note this applies to *all* Region 15 families regardless of current paid, free or reduced lunch status. **Note:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reserves the right to withdraw this approval subject to the availability of funding.) Additional information can be found in the recent letter from Region 15 Food Services.

Board of Education Meeting:

Our next scheduled Board of Education meeting is this Monday, September 14th, at 7:30pm. The agenda for the meeting can be found [here](#), and includes a presentation on our School Reopening.

- For live stream, click this [link](#) at the beginning of the meeting.
- For Public Comment: 1 (646) 558- 8656 or + 1 (301) 715-8592 / Webinar ID: 842 9142 7105

If you are unable to view the meeting online, it will be posted to our website the following day.

I thank you for choosing to be part of a community that highly values education. As we navigate through many situations that are beyond our control, your support is appreciated and essential to our success.

Joshua Smith, Superintendent
Region 15 Public Schools