



REGION 15 SCHOOLS 2020-21 REOPENING INFORMATION

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SCHOOLREOPENING@REGION15.ORG

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Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff,

We officially made it through the first week of the 2020-21 school year!

The Herculean effort involved in the work for a safe school reopening cannot be underestimated. Thank you to our administrators, educators, and staff across the district for the countless hours they've put in to ensure our students who are both in-person and remote learning have positive academic experiences this fall. I applaud our students and families for smoothly transitioning back to school; for being informed (I do understand the amount of information we have shared is enormous!); for reinforcing health and safety procedures; and for adjusting personal schedules. As we move through each day, we learn, adjust and adapt accordingly.

In the days ahead, I can not emphasize enough the importance of contingency plans for circumstances that could force us to adjust our learning environments. We remain in constant communication with local and state Departments of Public Health and we are continuously monitoring virus rates for both our county and region. This includes data from the [CT School Learning Model Indicator: Updated data on the key metrics developed by the Connecticut Department of Health \(DPH\) and the Department of Education \(CSDE\)](#), as well as continued and collaborative refinement of safety protocols and quarantining efforts if needed.

In addition, the State Department of Education, recently released an FAQ document that provides further clarification to some of our questions and will drive adjustments to our current plan.

[FAQs Regarding Reopening K-12 Public Schools from the CT State Department of Education](#)

Certainly, there is more to come and we will continue to share relevant information with you. Please continue to visit our [School Reopening Webpage](#) for updates and information.

On this Labor Day weekend and the last unofficial weekend of summer, I hope you find the opportunity to rest and rejuvenate and be sure to wear your masks and remain physically distant. Our ability to keep schools open will depend on the efforts of the greater community.

Health Checks - Beginning last Tuesday the district sent out a daily survey to staff and families asking several health questions. We have received a great deal of feedback on the difficulty many families have responding in a timely fashion and we have experienced a wide number of inaccurate reporting. It is important that families and staff are diligent about monitoring their individual health and that of their students. We will continue to send out a morning reminder, however we will only ask families to respond should they have any possible symptoms and you will not need to submit the survey for a student or staff not experiencing any of the criteria.

Chromebooks and personal technology: We continue to experience delays in technology shipments and are most likely two or three weeks away from delivery. This is not a local issue and school districts across the state and nation face the same challenge. Until our orders arrive we will be creative and flexible with student access to technology. Over the course of the next few weeks, we will ensure that all students in Grades K-12 understand how to access and use their Google Classroom. While Region 15, eagerly awaits the delivery of chromebooks so that each student has their own, we are asking students to bring in their own device if they have one.

Buses:

Monitors: Over the past week we have had between 25 and 30 staff riding our buses each day to support our drivers, provide student greetings and promote safe practices on our buses. Now that our students have had several days of reinforcing safety practices and our drivers are more comfortable with their routes, we will be reducing the monitors riding buses. We will provide support for bus runs experiencing difficulties, new drivers, and at other periodic times to review and reinforce safe practices.

Bus times: This year bus runs were developed with many changes factored in. The district was able to restructure how we transport high school students and begin the runs at a later time. Once we have run for another few days we will work with our transportation provider to review the expected run times and routes and make adjustments where needed. We expect that this will have small adjustments to bus times. Any changes will be communicated several days prior to taking effect so that families can plan accordingly.

Cohorts: We are holding off the release of the updated cohorts until we have made the busing adjustments mentioned above. While we understand families need them for planning, we want to limit possible changes. High School cohorts will not change based on any altered bus runs. All families will be in the same cohort.

Reminder full days of school starting on Tuesday.

Thank you for your patience and grace. I am unbelievably proud of the Region 15 community.

Joshua Smith
Superintendent
Region 15 Public Schools