



July 17, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am writing to update you on the status of our schools in light of the continuing global COVID-19 pandemic. On July 13, Governor Cuomo provided a formula for reopening schools in September: if a region is in Phase 4 of reopening and the 14-day infection rate is less than 5%, schools will reopen in some format as long as safety protocols are in place. Our region's infection rate is currently below 5%, so using this formula, our understanding is that our schools would begin the reopening process in some manner, while adhering to the substantial guidelines established by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and New York State Education Department (NYSED). Governor Cuomo has the final say on the reopening of schools.

Yesterday, NYSED issued extensive guidance that must be put into place in order for schools to open in some manner. By July 31, each district in the state must submit a plan indicating how it will meet the guidelines of these two state agencies to provide a socially distant education for children (i.e. mandatory wearing of face masks, socially distancing students and adults on buses and in schools, separating students as much as possible, and more). The state will then decide if the district's plan is adequate or if changes must be made before implementing the plan.

We have been working for the last several weeks to determine a plan of action while waiting for guidance from the state. Now that we have guidance from both the education and health departments, we are working as rapidly and effectively as possible with that information, as well as gathering input from various stakeholders and needed resources to put together a complete plan by the July 31 deadline.

To do this, we need your assistance. Later today we will send parents/guardians a link to a survey. In the survey, we will ask about your preferences and plans for this school year. We understand that at this time you may not be sure what you will decide for your child(ren)'s education, so please know that this is simply to help us plan. We ask that you complete just one survey for your child(ren) by Tuesday, July 21.

Early in August, we will provide you with further information regarding the reopening of our schools in September. At that time, we will ask you for your decision regarding your child(ren)s' educational plan for the 2020-21 school year. We truly appreciate your assistance and understanding as we work to develop our plan for educating and caring for our children this school year.

Currently, there are many unknowns, but there are some things that we do know. Our teachers, support staff, administrators, and everyone in the district care deeply about our children and want what is best for them. We want our students to learn to the best of their ability, and we also want them to be happy, healthy, and cared for.

We join with you in hoping that the pandemic situation improves and we can move forward into what will no doubt be a new normal for us. As we have stated throughout this difficult and challenging time, we wish everyone good health.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools

