



PLATTSBURGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Hornet Students and Parents:

As I've introduced in previous communications, and as you may be aware from recent Board of Education action, **our district plans for a return to in-person, 5-days/week instruction on April 12, 2021.** This transition will surely be welcome news to many, but may create anxiety for others. This is the next in a long series of difficult decisions wherein the district has tried to balance COVID safety with students' educational and emotional needs. Having recently passed the first anniversary of the initial COVID school closures to remote instruction, it is inarguable that student deficits exist. Increasing direct interaction with Teachers is an important step in beginning to address these growing student needs, and we are intent on providing a safe atmosphere for this healing and restoration.

Remote Parent Option

Parents' choice to have their child(ren) receive instruction remotely is currently provided by the Governor's Executive Order, and will continue. Students who are experiencing academic distress are required to join in-person instruction.

Beginning April 12th, students in the remote option will no longer receive their instruction through the provision of a daily instructional routine and the posting of related materials, but will instead be able (and expected) to synchronously join the in-class instruction via livestream which will be broadcast via Microsoft Teams. Teachers will not broadcast every moment of class time, but rather, will livestream the direct instruction portions of each scheduled class at the secondary level, and the direct instruction portions of English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading (if applicable), Writers' Workshop (when applicable), and specials at the elementary level. The duration of this direct instruction will vary at Teacher discretion and upon the material being covered. While these lessons will be recorded and made available through the end of this school year, synchronous attendance during these periods of livestreamed instruction is mandatory, except in certain pre-arranged circumstances such as childcare setting constraints (which may be discussed with Building Principal(s)).

Our original reopening plan (August, 2020) held that students could transition from the remote option to the hybrid or in-person mode only at prescribed 10-week intervals. During the Fall, this timeline was shortened to 5-weeks. Henceforth, students will be able to move from the remote option to the in-person mode at the building Principal's discretion – which will provide for a much quicker transition... likely just one week following parental request. This increased flexibility may be attractive to parents who covet a return to the in-person mode for their child(ren), but who may not be comfortable with such quite yet.

MISSION

Our mission is to educate each student of the Plattsburgh City School District by creating challenging, supportive, and interactive learning that advances intellectual, physical, social, and cultural development.

Food Service

Breakfast and lunch will be made available for any in-person students who wish to participate. Students in the parent remote option will still have access to multi-meal packs, which will continue to be made available for pick-up at the buildings.

Transportation

Bus service will continue for qualifying students. To the extent that bus runs will feature more students, pick-up and drop-off times may change slightly, and this will be coordinated through the individual Bus Drivers.

While COVID precautions such as mask wearing and open windows will remain, buses are inherently challenging settings in which to space students. So, as was the case with the return to hybrid instruction in September, families are encouraged to self-transport students if possible.

Ongoing COVID Protocols

Along with social distancing, mask wearing remains a powerful strategy in combating virus spread. As has been the case since our September return, near-universal mask wearing will continue, with designated mask breaks, medically-established alternatives, and food consumption being the sole permitted exceptions.

Fortunately, the warming weather will enable us to recapture some of the additional mitigation strategies which seemed to work well in the Fall; notably increased outdoor activities and the opening of classroom windows.

Despite CDC guidance which, under certain conditions, supports a reduction of the target distancing from six feet to three, we will continue to strive for this six-foot separation. As with our return in September, we acknowledge that achieving a full six feet of social distance at every instance of the day is likely not possible, and so fidelity to the mask-wearing expectation may be even more important. While we are confident that the vast majority of our instructional settings will still be able to accommodate the desired six-foot separation, certain additional mitigation strategies (such as the use of desktop dividers) may be introduced in some places.

Impact of Individual Behavior on COVID Outcomes

As we've seen since the onset of this virus, how we all conduct ourselves impacts the virus' foothold in our region and the degree to which normal activities can resume. From the beginning of the pandemic, it was clear that individual sacrifices support public interest. Despite increasing vaccination rates, it is critical that we stay vigilant with regards to COVID health and protocols. On behalf of all Hornet constituencies, I thank you for your continued efforts to keep our community safe.

A more detailed summary of our Return to In-Person Instruction plans is appended. As always, Administrators and Nurses stand ready to address your questions and concerns.

With thanks,



Jay Lebrun
Superintendent of Schools

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