



PORT WASHINGTON Union Free School District

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August 28, 2020

Dear Port Washington Community Members:

In an effort to find the safest and most instructionally sound elementary school opening decision, I brought together Central Office and building administrators, members and officers of the Port Washington Teachers Association, and representatives of the Board of Education and parent community, for intensive planning meetings earlier this week. The charge was to come up with a plan that ALL could fully support for our community moving forward. I am pleased to announce that we have created such a plan. Although it may dismay some to see that we have again changed the format of opening our five elementary schools, I believe it reflects our ability to listen, to learn, and to react responsibly as well as in concert. If you are interested in a fully virtual plan for your child for elementary (as well as middle and high school), the deadline for informing the district has been extended until next Friday, September 4. More information on that plan will be provided before the deadline.

As stated previously, it has been our goal to bring elementary students all in to make school as normal as possible for our youngest learners. This new plan will allow us to achieve that goal some time towards the end of September. It includes an *alternating day phase-in* of between eight and sixteen days (depending on the arrival of equipment), culminating in all elementary students attending school *five days a week in one classroom with their assigned teacher and classmates* for the 2020-21 school year.

As a committee, and in the spirit of working together as administrators, teachers, and community members, we believe this plan has multiple benefits for your children in the areas of safety, academic, and social and emotional learning.

- All students will be with one classroom teacher
- Students will stay in one classroom to minimize movement throughout their building
- We are following the New York State Department of Health and New York State Education Department guidance and guidelines. Students will be wearing masks, seated from 3-6 feet apart, with polycarbonate desk shields. We will maximize that distance wherever possible*
- All student desks will have a polycarbonate student desk shield
- All teachers will be provided with a polycarbonate instruction shield and a face shield
- All classrooms will be provided with a HEPA filter
- All buildings were reviewed by our engineer for necessary ventilation and air flow
- When masks cannot be worn (i.e. lunch) social distancing of 6 feet or greater will be required

By moving forward with this elementary plan, our students will be able to have socially distanced mask breaks in unused portions of their building or outside. We are also installing canopies and creating outdoor spaces for our students and teachers so they can go outside as long as the weather cooperates.

Phase-In

Beginning on September 8th, our elementary students will alternate days of learning in school and then learning at home (remotely). Whether in school or at home, your child will be instructed by their assigned teacher who is solely dedicated to educating their students. On in-school days, half of each school's students will, along with staff, acclimate to the complexities of socially distanced arrival and dismissal routines, lunch and recess procedures, and health and safety protocols. On at-home days, students will follow our previously published Remote Learning Plan, on page 11, (<https://www.portnet.org/cms/lib/NY01001023/Centricity/Domain/753/PWSD%20Re-Opening%20Plan%2073120.pdf>), which consists of multiple periods of live instruction with their classroom teacher. Using this remote plan will offer the entire school community (parents, students and staff) the opportunity to "practice" this method of learning in the event we need our schools to close due to rising infection rates.

Since we want to ensure that the polycarbonate shields (noted above) are fully installed before we begin full five-day instruction for every child, we have planned a **minimum phase-in of eight days**, *four* of which your child will be in school:

Grades K, 2, 4 – September 8th, 10th, 14th, 16th

Grades 1, 3, 5 – September 9th, 11th, 15th, 17th

Should the shields not be delivered and fully in place by September 18th, we may need to extend the phase-in up to eight additional days, *four* more of which your child will be in school:

Grades K, 2, 4 – September 18th, 22nd, 24th, 29th

Grades 1, 3, 5 – September 21st, 23rd, 25th, 30th

We expect all elementary students to be back in their school buildings on a 5-day schedule beginning no later than Thursday, October 1. We will notify parents as soon as possible as to when the phase-in will end and when five-day instruction will begin within the above parameters.

Finally, our Board of Education Meeting will be held Wednesday, September 2nd at 8 pm. We will be hosting two Virtual Forums for the community on Thursday, September 3rd at 2 pm and again at 7 pm.

I thank you for your patience as we move forward together in keeping our students and staff safe while ensuring our instructional programs are intact and robust.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Hynes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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***From the NYSED and DOH Guidance, July 17 2020.** *Responsible Parties must ensure social distancing is maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds, inclusive of students, faculty, and staff, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, using an elevator, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household.* Link: <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening-schools/nys-p12-school-reopening-guidance.pdf>