

BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUSSEX-WANTAGE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Greetings to all Sussex-Wantage Families. I am writing to provide you with greater clarification regarding the change in our school calendar and the decision to delay the opening of school until Tuesday, September 8th along with some other important updates. As I mentioned during our last Board of Education meeting, we have been diligent in examining our HVAC units in preparation for opening schools with COVID-19 in mind and maximizing ventilation. In that regard we identified that a motor for a Wantage School HVAC unit needed to be replaced and there was a minor last minute delay in the installation of that unit resulting in us needing to move our start date. We fully anticipate the motor being installed over the next two days and school should resume on September 8th with in person instruction for Cohort B and virtual instruction for Cohort A. This Thursday and Friday **all district schools will be closed**. Students are not working remotely this Thursday and Friday. Two days will be added to our calendar similar to how we add snow days.

Cohort Schedule

Initially, we will be employing a hybrid model of schooling that combines in-person instruction with remote learning. Specifically, our student body will be divided into two cohorts, identified by “A” or “B” groups. The first two weeks of school will operate as half days. Students will attend school in-person on an alternating schedule as part of their assigned “A” or “B” cohort. “All virtual” students will work via their digital assignments daily.

The schedule for a typical school week under this model is as follows:

- Monday- A Cohort
- Tuesday- B Cohort
- Wednesday- All Remote
- Thursday- A Cohort
- Friday- B Cohort

Your child’s cohort is displayed in the Parent Portal. As they arrive for their first two days prior to students attending, teachers will send digital invitations to their Google Classrooms or

equivalent program. Please anticipate receiving those invitations by September 2nd. The invitation will allow your child to engage in the Google Classroom process. Teachers will also make you aware of any pertinent information regarding their schedules, all remote days, Google Meets, or other contact information. SMS students schedules are located in the Parent Portal. If all goes well, we are hopeful that we may transition to full school days beginning September 21st while still maintaining half the student population in individual cohorts. Our website calendar depicts "A" or "B" cohort days.

CEL students who borrow technology devices should keep them home unless otherwise noted by their teacher. WES and SMS students should transport their district devices back and forth to school each day fully charged. If the device is fully charged overnight there should not be the need to bring the charger back and forth to school. The reason for this is that we may need to pivot to all remote learning and having the device in hand will foster a smoother transition.

SMS Students Transitioning to Different Classes

For the most part, students do not transition/change classes at CEL or WES. However, they do at SMS. While we have enhanced our cleaning routines, it is not viable for our staff to be able to clean each room, area, stairwell, etc...between class changes. With that in mind, some of you have asked if it is acceptable for your child to bring in hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing/disinfecting wipes that neutralize coronavirus for his/her own personal use. At this time, it is acceptable for your child to do that if it provides you with a greater degree of comfort and they are used as directed. Each classroom is also provided with general use hand sanitizer. We encourage your child to use hand sanitizer whenever they are unable to wash their hands.

Google Usernames/Passwords

If you experience difficulty accessing a device or account, updated Google usernames/passwords can be found in the Parent Portal by selecting the "Correspondence" tab.

Realtime Parent Portal Documents

Please be advised that important notices and information are in the "Documents" section of the Parent Portal. We ask that you review them prior to school beginning and answer the "Questions" section of the Parent Portal aligned to the documents.

Student Drop Off Procedures

It has become necessary to modify our drop off procedures. Unfortunately, staff will not be able to open car doors. We understand that it may take a little extra time for parents to assist younger children in this process and we encourage you to plan for minor delays. Upon arrival children will be screened for temperatures over 100°F.

Social Distancing

Social distancing will be reinforced throughout the school day. Only visitors with appointments will

be permitted to enter the building, and, whenever possible, parent and community meetings will be convened virtually. We will review all procedures and protocols with students during the first days of school.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are mandatory for faculty, staff, and students. Cloth face coverings that cover both the mouth *and* nose are recognized as acceptably protective. It is recommended that parents begin the process of acclimating their child(ren) to wearing masks over extended periods of time as we lead up to the opening of the school year. This is an essential precaution we must take for everyone's safety. Such practice will make the students' transition to the new protocols easier.

Note: all dress code expectations apply.

Screenings

We are asking parents and guardians to self screen their children at home prior to coming to school for illness or a temperature above 100°F. Screenings will also be conducted at school upon arrival. Any students who have a fever or exhibit signs or symptoms of illness will be isolated in a location that fosters dignity while his/her parents are contacted to pick up their child. If you have travelled to an area identified as having a travel advisory, please adhere to the NJDOH travel guidelines found here:

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/which-states-are-on-the-travel-advisory-list-are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>

Student/Staff Safety and Hygiene

Education and practice on hygiene such as regular handwashing, the use of hand sanitizer, and social distancing will take place for all students and staff. Hand washing will be reinforced regularly and hand sanitizing stations will be provided to every classroom and strategically placed at other multiple locations throughout the building.

Procedures for Possible Incidents of COVID-19

It is challenging to describe what may occur for various reports of possible COVID-19 because every circumstance may be different. In essence, possible incidents concerning COVID-19 are required to be promptly reported to the Sussex County Department of Health and they will advise us accordingly. The Department of Health will make an initial assessment of how to respond to the specific circumstance. Depending upon the issue their recommendations may range from a 24 hour closure to obtain more information and conduct contact tracing to closing individual classrooms or the entire district for quarantine. In the event a confirmed case arises, stakeholders will be informed while maintaining confidentiality.

We reiterate our commitment to remain adaptable to our local and regional health conditions, and state and federal guidelines for operating schools. The ultimate goal will always be not just a full return to school for all students and educators, but to keep schools open. We perceive that by acting cautiously, it provides us with the best opportunity to accomplish that in a safe manner. We

also understand that this is a less than ideal circumstance and it is only through collaboration, cooperation, patience, and perseverance that we can overcome this challenge.

Sincerely,

Michael Gall
Superintendent/CEL Principal

Important Links:

Restart and Recovery Plan

<https://www.swregional.org/Page/539>

Reopening Plan Presentation

<https://www.swregional.org/Page/540>

“A Day in the Life” Presentation/Google Site

<https://sites.google.com/swregional.org/adayinthelife/welcome>