

Brooklyn Public Schools' Reopening Update

July 2, 2020

[Connecticut COVID-19 Response](#)
[Northeast District Department of Health](#)
[Brooklyn Public Schools Website](#)

August 2, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope that you had a wonderful weekend and that you and your loved ones are well. I wanted to give you an update regarding Brooklyn Public Schools' reopening plans. I have also included links to the [State of Connecticut](#), [Northeast District Department of Health](#) and the [Brooklyn Public School's websites](#). They will remain at the top of my communications to families and I encourage you to visit these resources to answer questions and learn more about the virus and the District's response to how to create healthy learning environments. I would like to begin by stating that while I remain optimistic and hopeful about reopening, I try to look at the bright side of a challenging situation. Please do not mistake my optimism for believing that when we reopen schools it will be "normal" or "risk free". It will be very different for everyone and we must follow risk mitigation strategies that are mandated and some that are suggested. Some families believe that the guidance I am mandated to follow when developing our reopening plan is extreme and unnecessary, while others feel that we are not doing enough. Some students and families did very well during the three months of distance learning last year, while others really struggled. I am grateful that we are able to offer a plan for students to return to the school building and others may be able to remain in a distance learning model because each child and family is different. I appreciate that each family can make the decision that is best for them.

[DRAFT Reopening Plan](#): The draft is posted on the website and will reflect a revision date when updated. I am hoping to clarify who will be returning to school and who will be riding on the bus. I also want to clarify the learning models further. We are currently planning for a "full reopen", not a normal reopening. This will require students and staff to wear masks all day, mask breaks, and cohorting of students and staff to make contact tracing easier if there should be a positive or suspected case of the virus in our school. This model would bring all students back to school and depending on how many students return will result in students being spaced at desks that are 4-6' apart. While we will be using multiple mitigation strategies such as masks, handwashing and cleaning, this does not meet the 6' suggested distancing that we have all heard about. We are continuing to track how many students will actually return to in person school to determine if we can increase physical distances.

I want you to be aware that we are currently planning for a full reopening, which means all students come to school every day. We are also seriously planning for a hybrid model. The hybrid model will have half of the students coming to school for two days, the other half attending for two days and everyone participating in distance learning three days/week. We are currently reviewing class lists and dividing them into an A group and B group. Groups will allow for students from the same family to attend school

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The Brooklyn Public Schools

on the same day. We will send you the groupings soon to verify that we have families grouped together. We understand that there may be child care concerns and the need to group children together so we will share this soon. We are taking multiple factors into account as we divide each class and will be able to honor some requests for changes but may not be able to honor all requests.

There is a possibility that we may open under the hybrid model, but this model impacts families and their ability to return to work. It may also impact staff who may have children at home and may result in not having enough staff or funding to replace teachers who are unable to come to work.

While these decisions are difficult to make, we ultimately will make a decision to educate children while responding to the health and safety of our students, staff and families. The State is providing guidelines this week regarding when to pivot to the hybrid model. I will remain in contact with you and inform you as soon as a decision is made. We are trying to comply with regularly changing guidelines.

Returning to school and transportation survey: You received a survey asking if you would be sending your child to school as well as questions about transportation. I am asking that you [please complete this 4 question simple survey](#). If you have already stated you will be opting out for distance learning or homeschooling your child at the start of the year you do not need to respond. We are carefully counting the number of students who are in each classroom and on each bus to maximize physical distance between students. **Your response is VERY important. Please respond as soon as possible but before Thursday, August 6th.** You may change your mind, but your response to this survey will allow us to plan. Thank you!

Calendar. The BOE this week approved a modified calendar, the link is provided and appears on the district website. With permission from the State, we have created three additional PD days at the beginning of the school year to learn about revised health and safety, how to teach students in person, in a hybrid, and in the opt-out model as we move forward. **The first day is 8/31/2020 for grades K-8 and 9/1 for preschool.**

Thank you for taking the time to complete the [survey](#). I will post this and other communications to the website and Facebook.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Buell
Superintendent

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