

## Update from the Liberty Superintendent - July 7, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I just wanted to give you an update on how things are going with the Re-entry Plan for Liberty School District. As you may know, we received guidelines from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), which is the governing body over public schools. We have two teams of staff/parents/community members who are diligently working on the plan, and have been since the beginning of the summer. However, with the parameters defined by ISBE, we now can quit guessing what we **might** be able to do and focus on what we now **know** we must do. Remember that the guidelines change quite frequently, due to guidance from the Center of Disease Control (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), so be prepared to adjust for this.

As of now, students may return to school **in person** in August 2020. Parents/guardians will have a choice to send their child to school or have the child continue with remote learning. We know there may be some extenuating circumstances why a child cannot attend school such as a compromised immune system. Teachers are charged with providing both types of instruction. Because of this demand, the school day may be shortened in length in order to provide both types of lessons and to communicate with remote learners daily. However, as of now, we intend to bring all students back Monday through Friday, unless ISBE says we must close due to an increase in COVID cases. This will be different than this past spring, as students will be learning new material and be graded on their work. Also, students must be engaged in learning for five hours per day, which includes teaching, working on schoolwork, watching videos of lessons, and communicating with the teacher. We know this will be challenging for those who choose not to attend in person. Please be aware of these expectations from ISBE.

Anyone in the building needs to wear a face mask. I know this is a passionate subject for many people. Please know that we are going to do everything we can to make this manageable by taking students outside (where they do not need to wear a face mask), giving students mask breaks, and spacing students out to reduce close contact whenever possible to adhere to social distancing (6 feet apart). We ask that students bring their own mask they feel comfortable in, but we will have disposable ones available.

Other responsibilities that schools must adhere to is taking care of the social-emotional well-being of students. Keeping the building clean and disinfected, taking daily symptom checks and temperatures of everyone by scanning foreheads with a thermometer. Needless to say, we have had to purchase a lot of thermometers, disposable masks, and cleaning supplies. Students riding the bus will need to have their

temperature checked before they stay on the bus to be transported to school. We are still working on the logistics of this. One suggestion in the guidance is to see how many parents could transport their child rather than have them ride the school bus, to help decrease the chances of their child being exposed to more students than necessary. We will be asking this question in a survey. We will also be asking if families will be choosing in-person instruction or remote learning.

Other details to be followed is there can be no more than 50 people to a space, so this presents issues with the cafeteria, gym, and recess. We are working on plans to address this. Children will not be dressing out for PE and we may be utilizing lockers differently. Students may be assigned to specific areas for restroom and washing hands to minimize the mixing with other students. All of this is to maintain their safety and cut down on the amount of other people they come in contact with. Shared items will not be allowed, which include classroom supplies, water fountains, and PE and playground equipment. After every group eats or plays outside, all areas will be cleaned and disinfected. There can be no field trips taken or visitors to school. Drop off and pick up will need to be changed to accommodate for this. As you might imagine, there are many details to work out. We may need to alter our calendar a bit to allow for more planning time on the first couple of days of the school year. Sorry for any inconvenience, but we must be ready to protect our children. Plus, we are super excited to see them in person and help them grow academically!

Stay tuned for more information to come. For now, get ready for school to be back in session in the fall, but with a “new normal.” To help us with our Re-entry Plan, could you please answer two questions regarding your intentions.

1. Knowing all the requirements for in-person instruction (i.e. wearing masks), what mode of learning do you choose for your child? Remote or In-person?
2. Do you plan to ride the school bus?

Survey is at <https://bit.ly/CUSD2-0706> **Please complete the survey by July 13.**

Thank you for your patience as we work through this overwhelming process. Just know that everyone at Liberty School District cares about our students and we want to make this the best situation we can under the circumstances! Your positive attitude will be critical in the success of the Re-entry Plan, so please help us and try to convey this to your child.

Respectfully,

Kelle S. Bunch, Ed. D.