



OXFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Sailing Toward Success”

July 1, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and OXPS Staff,

I wanted to update you on where we are in the process for planning for fall school re-opening given the guidance districts received last week (**DESE Initial Fall Reopening Guidance, June 25, 2020**) which was sent to all of you. First, I would reiterate what the Commissioner said in the second paragraph of his letter, “...*we want to start the school year with as many of our students as possible returning to in-person settings.*” As you reviewed the document, the new guidance from the medical experts indicates that students can return to in-person learning with the new safety requirements. One of these requirements is that classrooms will have to be setup so that students are physically distanced **three feet apart, seat edge to seat edge.**

The Commissioner has asked all districts conduct a feasibility study in their buildings to measure classroom spaces in order to determine how many desks that classrooms can hold, given these new guidelines. In addition, he has asked districts to look at spaces that are not typically utilized for classroom instruction such as auditoriums, cafeterias, libraries, and large group community rooms in an effort to try to bring back all students to in-person learning. The guidelines also request that we minimize student movement by keeping students in smaller cohort groups. While this might be easier at the elementary levels and even at the middle school level, where students are already in teams, it could present a challenge at the high school level, and one that may encompass rethinking our traditional housing model for staff. To that end, working with Building Principals, the School Business Administrator, and other District Administrators, I will be spending next week in all our schools completing these measurements. Only then will we have an idea as to whether we can bring **all** students back to in-person learning in the fall.

However, the Commissioner has asked that all districts also be prepared for other possibilities in the fall with the development of two other learning models. In addition to measuring for **in-person learning**, he has also requested that districts plan for **remote learning and a hybrid model plan**. If there is a fall resurgence of COVID-19, then all districts could be shut down again and all students would return to remote learning. We hope this will NOT be the case. However, we will be better prepared to meet the challenge of remote learning should this occur. The state and we are looking at distance learning platforms that can enhance student learning should remote learning be necessary. Additionally, a new more robust remote learning model will benefit those students who may not be able to return to in-person learning this fall should this be the case.

The third model, a hybrid model, would most likely occur **IF** districts cannot bring back all students to in-person learning this fall because of classroom space restrictions resulting from the

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distancing guidelines. A hybrid model provides a combination of in-person learning and remote learning. Typically, schools would divide students into cohorts such as Cohort A and Cohort B. When Cohort A was in school for in-person learning, Cohort B would be learning remotely. Districts would not have to implement this model if they can fit all students into classrooms under the new spacing guidelines. However, until we complete our feasibility study, we will not know if a hybrid model will be needed.

Finally, this school year will not be a typical one, no matter what schooling model is in place. To that end, I have created district and building fall re-opening planning teams to ensure that we have the oversight and plans in place that will be needed for the health and safety of students and staff. In addition, each building will have a COVID-19 Response Leader to ensure clarity and consistency in procedures and messaging across the district. Also, I have established eight (8) specific planning teams whose focus will be in the following areas: **Communications, Facilities and Operations, Health and Safety, Personnel and Staffing, Special Education & ELL, Student Supports, Teaching and Learning, and Transportation.** These groups will be meeting remotely during the month of July to tackle some of the key COVID-19 related challenges and to make recommendations to the district team. If you would like to join one of these groups, feel free to reach out to the group leader listed below.

Planning Team

- Communications Planning Team
- Facilities and Operations Planning Team
- Health and Safety Planning Team
- Personnel and Staffing Planning Team
- Special Education & ELL Planning Team
- Student Supports Planning Team
- Teaching and Learning Planning Team
- Transportation Planning Team

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Stay well and safe!



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