

# PINE PLAINS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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WWW.PPCSD.ORG

August 27, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I am writing to update you on the preparations for the opening of school. Each school has been in touch with parents on opening events such as laptop pick up, orientations, supply lists etc. The districtwide preparations are moving forward as well.

Parents can greatly assist us in our planning for reopening by:

- Completing the transportation request form if you have not already done so.
- Completing the free and reduced-price meal application form if you think that there is any possibility that you may be eligible.
- Please contact our food service department if you want to be added to our meals program either pick up or delivery at the opening of school.
- Finally, if you have no internet service or very poor service and have not notified us, please contact your school principal with that information.

As you know, the Pine Plains School District will reopen in a fully remote format. A number of parents have asked how we will assess the situation at five weeks in order to make a decision on moving to the hybrid model. There are a number of factors involved. We will look at school reopening experiences nationally, in New York State and specifically in Dutchess County to measure their success and learn from those experiences. We will also look at the infection rate for COVID in our area.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly we will review the availability of testing for the COVID virus and contact tracing. We believe that our Dutchess County Health Department is adding staff to assist school districts in the event of an outbreak. That is a work in progress and should be in place at the five-week mark. Additionally, the County is working on making tests readily available with shorter result turnaround times. All of this will be assessed as we look to transition to hybrid learning.

Earlier this week the Governor gave permission for SOME school sports (soccer, field hockey, cross-country, golf etc.) to start as of September 21<sup>st</sup>. What he called the "high risk sports" of volleyball, football and cheerleading could practice as of that date but could not play games until sometime in the future. The problem is that in addition to being unworkable this would create an inequitable situation among student athletes.

Most importantly, our focus has been on getting our students back to in-person learning as soon as it is safe to do so. Beginning the athletic program in the fall would place that effort at risk. The New York State Council of School Superintendents has recommended to the Governor that school athletics not start until January 1<sup>st</sup>. That is a recommendation that I support as being the best course of action to reopen our schools. I will keep you updated as this issue evolves.

As always, stay health and be safe.

Martin D. Handler  
Superintendent

TOWNS: PINE PLAINS, MILAN STANFORD, NORTHEAST, CLINTON, DUTCHESS COUNTY:  
GALLATIN, ANCRAM, LIVINGSTON, CLERMONT, COLUMBIA COUNTY