

PINE PLAINS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

2829 CHURCH STREET • PINE PLAINS, NEW YORK 12567-5504

TEL: (518) 398-7181 FAX: (518) 398-6592

WWW.PPCSD.ORG

March 12, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I am writing to share with you our plan to increase in-person learning for our students. The key factor that is allowing us to do this is modification/flexibility around the strict six-foot social distancing requirement between students in the classroom. As I have written before, there is conflicting information between the NY State Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization. Some, more than others, are taking a more flexible approach. Our Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health has advised school districts that social distancing “*to the greatest extent possible*” is acceptable as long as other mitigation measures are in place. Our school physician has reviewed all of this information and has advised us that social distancing *to the greatest extent possible* is acceptable.

Our teams have worked hard to evaluate mitigation procedures and distancing options. One significantly effective mitigation technique is improvement in ventilation. We are increasing airflow through classrooms via windows, fans and classroom doors left open. As we add mitigation techniques, we will continue others such as mask requirements, handwashing reminders, frequent cleaning and more. In addition, COVID testing of a small sample of students whose parents have consented will begin after the spring recess.

Given the approvals that we have been given and the techniques that we are implementing, *we have decided to expand in-person instruction to four days per week beginning Monday April 5th*. School will be in person Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday with Wednesdays (green days) continuing on the same remote schedule as listed on the district calendar. Please note that *beginning April 5th the hybrid schedule option will no longer be offered. Students will be either fully remote or in-person.* We all recognize the need to have our students back to school in-person to the greatest degree possible. We believe that the steps we are taking does that while providing the safest environment possible for our students and staff.

Last week we sent parents a brief survey to complete electronically. That survey will provide us the information that we need to plan for our classroom and transportation needs. It is extremely important that parents complete one survey for each of their students by this Monday, March 15th. The link is included below. We will utilize the responses on the survey to finalize our plans and accommodations. Once we transition, parents needing to make a change to their selection should contact their student’s school office.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RETURN_IN_PERSON

In an effort to provide more detailed information we plan to have Zoom meetings to explain the changes and answer parent questions. We have tentatively scheduled those for Wednesday, March 24th at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm. Further details on that event will follow as the date draws near.

Be advised that should the infection rate in Dutchess County increase significantly we may be directed to return to the hybrid-learning format. Additionally, if we have a significant rise in cases that requires quarantine of staff members we may be forced to make changes due to staff shortages.

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Our entire school community needs to cooperate for these changes to be successful. Emphasize with your students the importance of basic COVID precautions including mask wearing, hand washing and avoiding large gatherings. Above all if your child has any of the symptoms listed on our health screener do not send them to school.

I very much look forward to seeing our students in school on a more regular basis.

Please be well and stay safe,

Dr. Martin D. Handler
Superintendent