



UTICA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you know, we are continuing to experience very difficult and unprecedented times due to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic. The uncertainty of this disease has made all of us rethink what is normal to us in so many ways. The same can be said for what we have experienced in education since the closure of schools back on March 16, 2020.

Over the past several weeks, I have been meeting regularly with my staff to plan for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. A District-wide School Reopening Task Force with a variety of stakeholders has also been meeting regularly to review the New York State guidance and provide input for our school reopening plan which must be submitted to the New York State Education Department by July 31, 2020.

I wanted to take this important opportunity to let parents know that guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Health and Safety Guidelines from the Governor's Office and newly released guidance from the New York State Education Department, especially as it pertains to social distancing and other safety measures, is helping to shape what school may look like in September.

Based on the guidance from New York State, school districts have been tasked with creating school reopening plans for several non-traditional scenarios in the event that a full reopening is not possible. This includes the implementation of a hybrid model to reduce the number of students present on buses and in our school buildings in order to properly social distance when possible and prevent the spread of COVID-19. A hybrid model consists of a schedule where students attend school part-time in-person and part-time remotely to support in-person instruction. School districts have also been required to plan for remote learning in the event that another closure is caused due to significant spread of the Coronavirus. Our school reopening plan will also integrate key components as outlined in the guidance from the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Department of Health which can be found on-line at the following links:

<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-presents-framework-guidance-reopen-new-york-state-schools>

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidance.pdf

Once our school reopening plan is finalized, it will be presented to the Board of Education and the New York State Education Department for approval. Upon approval, I will be communicating the plan to all of our parents, students, teachers, and staff. In the meantime, Governor Cuomo is scheduled to make an official announcement on the reopening of schools across the state during the week of August 1, 2020.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your perseverance during these very trying times. We look forward to resuming our work with all of you in September as we embark upon a new school year.

Sincerely,

Bruce J. Karam
Superintendent of Schools