



UTICA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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July 29, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On Tuesday, July 28, 2020, the Utica City School District's Board of Education approved the district's school reopening plan for the 2020-2021 school year that was created by the District's School Reopening Task Force, which is made up of critical stakeholders including principal, teacher, teacher assistant, parent, union leadership, transportation, school nurse, school security, food service, custodial, and maintenance representatives. As a result, the school year is scheduled to open on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 with a hybrid model of in-person instruction, blended with remote learning for our elementary students, while middle school and high school students will begin the school year with full remote learning.

Following a thorough review of the New York State Department of Health and New York State Education Department guidance documents and careful consideration of the requirements for school reopening, the District-Wide School Reopening Task Force determined that a phased-in approach to the reopening of school for the 2020-2021 school year as described above is the most prudent approach in order to provide for the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and their families.

At our elementary schools, students have been divided into two groups (cohorts) and will report two days per week (Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday) for in-person instruction with their classroom teacher beginning on September 8th according to a schedule which will be provided to you by your child's principal before the start of school. Students will receive instruction in all subjects including "specials" such as Art, Physical Education, Music, etc. on the days they are in school. All classrooms have been set up with student desks spaced to allow at least 6' social distancing as per the mandated New York State requirements. Students and staff will be required to wear a face covering except when eating meals. The wearing of face coverings at all other times is strongly recommended by the New York State Department of Health and can be found in their July 13, 2020 guidance document. On the three days that elementary students do not report to school, they will be provided with remote lessons, activities and assignments in each subject.

As approved by the Board of Education, our middle schools and high school will begin the school year with full remote learning. Students will be following their normal daily schedule which will be mailed home to parents before the beginning of school, along with specific instructions, guides, and classroom codes for remote learning. The Task Force strongly recommended having students and teachers follow their normal schedule during remote learning in order to provide organization and structure for accountability, including instructional delivery, regular attendance, and student grades. Lessons will also be archived so that students have the ability to refer back to them when in need of review or assistance.

A hybrid model blending in-person instruction and remote learning will be phased in beginning with the middle schools, and then with the high school, at a time determined by the school district based on conditions and metrics which allow for the expansion of in-person instruction across the entire school district, upon approval by the Board of Education. These conditions include scientific data on the rate of the spread of COVID-19 in our community and the state.

We are an Equal Opportunity Employer which fully and actively supports equal access for all regardless of Race, Color, Weight, National Origin, Ethnic Group, Religion, Religious Practice, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Gender, Age, Veteran Status, or Genetic Information.

All teachers in the school district will report to their building assignments every day in order to provide instruction to students under the supervision of the building principal, whether they are teaching students in-person or remotely. This will allow principals to effectively supervise in-person and remote instruction and to monitor student attendance.

Parents who may not wish to send their child to school due to COVID-19 concerns will have the option of full remote learning with the classroom teacher. In addition, the school district will provide *Chromebooks* and mobile internet to students who do not have a computer or access to the internet, in order to insure that 100% of our students are able to access and participate in remote learning.

Finally, pursuant to New York State Department of Health requirements, **PARENTS MUST SCREEN THEIR CHILD(REN) BEFORE SENDING THEM TO SCHOOL, INCLUDING TAKING THEIR TEMPERATURE. PARENTS MUST KEEP SICK CHILDREN HOME, INCLUDING ANY CHILD THAT HAS A TEMPERATURE OF 100° OR HIGHER.**

Under New York State's mandatory guidance, your child's school is also required to screen all students before entering the building and to **SEND HOME ANY STUDENT WHO IS SICK OR REGISTERS A TEMPERATURE ABOVE 100°** in order to provide for the safety of all other students, staff, and their families. It is critical that we work together in this endeavor.

The Utica City School District will continue to monitor the situation, review any new guidance that may come from New York State and make any plan adjustments, if necessary, following the Governor's official school reopening announcement which is scheduled to be communicated during the first week of August. Within the next two weeks, parents will receive a communication from their child's school principal with specific information and instructions pertaining to the opening of the 2020-2021 school year.

Thank you for all of your support during these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,



Bruce J. Karam
Superintendent of Schools