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## A Message from the Superintendent of Schools - Reopening Update

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July 30, 2020

Dear Irvington School Community,

I would like to begin by thanking the 500 community members who attended last night's virtual Board of Education meeting focused on the reopening of school. For those of you who were not able to attend the meeting, you can review the presentation materials by [clicking here](#) and watch the video by [clicking here](#).

As you can imagine, developing the District's reopening plan has been a very challenging process, as we seek to balance the health and safety needs of our students and staff by following all applicable guidance, while maintaining our commitment to providing the very best educational experience possible. I wish we were not facing this terrible pandemic, and I also wish there were opportunities to have all of our students physically in school daily. Unfortunately, based upon our current inability to meet social distancing requirements and still provide for the safe operations of each school, this is simply not possible.

By design, we expect that our plans will evolve with changes in health and safety guidance as well as from our own experiences. Throughout the school year, we will closely monitor the success of our learning plans and will seek feedback from the school community. This information will help to inform any modifications that may be considered necessary.

In developing our reopening plan, that was presented to the Board of Education last night, we maintained our focus on four guiding principles that are clearly addressed throughout the IUFSD reopening plan:

- Ensure the health and safety of students and staff
- Promote equity and accessibility to learning for all students
- Provide instruction that meets the needs of all students
- Support the social and emotional needs of all students

The reality of the situation that we find ourselves in dictates that health and safety must be the top priority. As a result, barring any changes in guidance from the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and the New York State Education Department (SED) and directives from Governor Cuomo (Andy), the Irvington schools will begin the 2020-21 school year in a hybrid-learning model that will reduce density in the classrooms to meet social distancing requirements.

### **Hybrid-Learning Model Implementation:**

In the Irvington UFSD hybrid-learning model, students will attend school for in-person learning two consecutive days each week, either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday, and will participate in distance learning the other three days. Wednesday will consist of distance learning for all students.

Students will be assigned to a particular cohort based upon the following:

Cohort A: Last names beginning with A-L

Cohort B: Last names beginning with M-Z

It is expected that students will follow the same curriculum and pacing, regardless of whether they are engaged in in-person learning or distance learning. To support such an approach, live or synchronous learning experiences will be provided for students engaged in distance learning. While specific details of student schedules and learning experiences will be further outlined in future communications, I assure the school community that the distance and hybrid approaches to learning will far exceed those that were experienced in the spring. Additionally, I want to advise the community that in order to meet DOH guidelines, some class and schedule changes may be required. If your child is to be affected by any such changes, school staff members will personally contact you. Below, please find a graphic representation of the hybrid-learning model.

<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>TH</i>	<i>F</i>
A	A	Distance Learning for All Students	B	B

**September School Calendar Modifications:**

As a school community, we are committing to facilitating a safe and well-organized opening to the school year. This year, there is great need to provide training to students and staff on essential health and safety requirements, changes to common school routines and potential modifications to school facilities. Therefore, to ensure everyone is comfortable and prepared for the adjustments that will be made, the District will adjust the opening days to the school year for staff and students to have the necessary time to adapt to these shifts. The school year will begin with four days of 100% distance learning that will be followed by one week of modified in-person attendance, which will be followed in week three by the full implementation of hybrid learning. Below is an illustration of the modified school calendar.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>7</b> LABOR DAY NO SCHOOL	<b>8</b> 100% Distance Learning	<b>9</b> 100% Distance Learning	<b>10</b> 100% Distance Learning	<b>11</b> 100% Distance Learning
<b>14</b> A1 On-Site, others Distance Learning	<b>15</b> A2 On-Site, others Distance Learning	<b>16</b> 100% Distance Learning	<b>17</b> B1 On-Site, others Distance Learning	<b>18</b> B2 On-Site, others Distance Learning
<b>21</b> A On-Site B Distance Learning	<b>22</b> A On-Site B Distance Learning	<b>23</b> 100% Distance Learning	<b>24</b> B On-Site A Distance Learning	<b>25</b> B On-Site A Distance Learning
<b>28</b> A On-Site B Distance Learning	<b>29</b> A On-Site B Distance Learning	<b>30</b> 100% Distance Learning	<b>1</b> B On-Site A Distance Learning	<b>2</b> B On-Site A Distance Learning

I fully understand that this transition to school, and through such an unfamiliar schedule, will be challenging. However, we believe that it is essential to approach the first days of school and the start of the school year in such a manner as to ensure that the school facilities are as safe as possible.

**Transportation To/From School:**

The District will continue to provide transportation for all eligible students. However, based on survey data, we anticipate that the vast majority of students will either walk to school or be transported via car. As a result, each school will develop and communicate specific procedures for arrival and dismissal times to control traffic flow and reduce congregating to maintain social distancing. In the near future, the District will survey the parent community to collect more data on the use of school buses. This information will be utilized to plan our bus routes as efficiently and safely as possible. Please be reminded that just as it will be in school, students will be required to wear a face covering while riding the school buses and at bus stops. The District will make all reasonable efforts to provide as much distancing as possible on the buses.

**Travel Restrictions:**

In response to increased rates of COVID-19 transmission in certain areas within the United States, and to protect New York's successful containment of COVID-19, the State has joined with New Jersey and Connecticut in jointly issuing a travel advisory for anyone returning from travel to states and countries that have a significant degree of community-wide spread of COVID-19. Families, students and staff members are asked to avoid travel to these areas and to avoid contact with those that have. If one has traveled to, or has been in contact with others who have traveled to states identified in the travel advisory, they are required by New York State to quarantine for 14 days. During that time, they will not be permitted to be on school grounds. It is very difficult for me to say this, but please avoid traveling outside of our region when possible. For an up-to-date listing of states currently falling under the travel advisory, please visit the [New York State Travel Advisory website](#) as well as the [CDC's guidelines](#) for international travel.

**Future Communications:**

In the coming weeks, each principal and I will continue to provide on-going updates and more specific details related to the opening of school. It is essential that you follow our communications closely because directives from the Governor and shifts in DOH guidance can alter the District's plans. All communications will be posted to the [Reopening Irvington UFSD website](#) for your reference.

These are difficult times for all of us in our school community, but together we must continue to do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19. I urge you to require your child(ren) to always wear face masks when leaving your home and ensure that your child does not participate in large social gatherings and adheres to social distancing requirements. By doing so, we will prevent further spread of illness and will help to accelerate the pace by which we will have the opportunity to return to a traditional school schedule.

I greatly appreciate your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,

Kris

Dr. Kris Harrison  
Superintendent of Schools

