

Sullivan West Central School District

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Stephen A. Walker
Superintendent of Schools



July 22, 2020

Dear Bulldog Families:

On behalf of the entire Sullivan West Central School District, I hope that all of you are enjoying these days of summer and the (very) warm weather. As you can imagine, this is a remarkably busy time for our School District, and I ask that you read the updated information below carefully.

Graduation for the Class of 2020: On Saturday, July 18, we held two separate Graduation ceremonies, each celebrating approximately half the students in the Class of 2020. This was done in order to provide for social distancing, while still allowing each graduate to bring members of his/her family as guests. We are deeply proud of this Class, and I ask that you please join me in congratulating our newest Sullivan West alumni, the Class of 2020!

Re-Opening of School Buildings in September: Planning for the re-opening of our school buildings has been part of our work as a leadership team and staff for several weeks, and we were aided in this effort on Thursday when the New York State Education Department (NYSED) issued their guidance and requirements for all school districts in New York State. This 145-page document from NYSED is posted on our website for your reference, along with guidance from the New York State Department of Health and information from the New York State Board of Regents. The webpage can be found under "Quick Links" on our homepage, or by clicking here: <https://www.swcsd.org/Page/2747>. We will be regularly updating this website with further information over the next few weeks.

With regard to the re-opening of our school buildings, our goal is to allow for as many students to be physically in-school as possible at one time, while providing for the health and safety of our students and staff by allowing for the necessary social distancing and complying with the requirements from NYSED and the Department of Health. In order to allow for social distancing of our students and our staff, we will be limiting the daily number of students attending school in-person to approximately 50%. This will mean that it is likely that your child(ren) will attend school in-person 2 days per week, while taking part in at-home learning the remaining 3 days per week. By splitting our student body into two groups, one group will attend school in-person on Monday and Tuesday of each week, while the second group will attend school in-person on Thursday and Friday. Masks will be required for all students and staff at all times, with the exception of when eating and drinking, taking part in physical activity, and during classroom instruction (as long as physical distancing can occur). All students and staff will receive daily temperature checks as part of the Department of Health requirements, and all staff members and visitors will take part in a daily screening questionnaire, also as required.

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Students who ride our school buses will still be able to do so each day that they are scheduled for in-person school attendance. A maximum of 1 student per seat will be required on our buses, with the exception of siblings, who can sit together. Students will be required to wear masks while on the bus. As recommended by NYSED, I encourage our parents to drive your child(ren) to and from school each day, if it is possible to do so given your family's schedule. At this point, we anticipate that daily or short-term bus passes to change a child's drop-off location will not be permitted. If your child(ren) normally ride our school bus, but you are not comfortable having your child ride our bus in the Fall and instead will be providing separate transportation for your child(ren) on their scheduled days of in-person instruction, please contact Jessica Franke at frankejes@swcsd.org so that we can schedule our bus routes accordingly.

The information above is a general overview of our current planning for the re-opening of schools in September, and I recognize that it leaves many questions unanswered. We are continuing to work through the guidance and requirements from New York State, and we will continue to provide you with further detail in the weeks to come. As you know, this is an ever-changing situation, and our schools are responding to these changes as quickly and thoughtfully as we can.

I encourage you, as parents, to send your children to school on their scheduled days for in-person instruction beginning in September. Our staff is working exceptionally hard to ensure that our schools remain vibrant, happy places for students to learn, and I can assure that they will continue to be in the Fall. However, if you are not comfortable sending your child(ren) to school to receive in-person instruction in the Fall, and you would prefer that your child(ren) receive at-home instruction 5 days per week, please contact me directly at walkerste@swcsd.org, so that we can plan to accommodate your request.

Please know that we will continue to work tirelessly to provide the excellent educational experience that our students, and each of you, have come to expect from Sullivan West Schools. Please feel free to contact me directly with questions that you may have. We will be sharing more information and detail with you in the weeks to follow.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Walker
Superintendent of Schools

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