

Sullivan West Central School District

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Re-Opening of Sullivan West School Buildings **Summer 2020** **Frequently Asked Questions**

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Health and Safety:

- *What will be the schools' approach to temperature checks for students?*

Each day, every student will have their temperature checked prior to entering the school building by trained members of our staff. Any student who registers a temperature above 100.0 degrees will immediately report to the School Nurse for follow-up evaluation. At that point, based upon the evaluation by the School Nurse, the parent/guardian will likely be called to pick up the student.

NEW AS OF SEPTEMBER 14:

- *Will the School District be testing students for COVID-19?*

No, the School District will not be conducting COVID-19 testing. All districts received the following guidance from the State Education Department regarding testing, which reads: *"It is strongly recommended that schools comply with CDC guidance and not conduct COVID-19 testing or require testing or antibody testing of students or staff members. The decision of whether a test needs to be conducted should be determined by a healthcare provider or the local department of health."*

- *What will be the requirement for students and wearing masks?*

Students will be required to wear masks at all times, with the following exceptions:

- When eating and/or drinking
- During aerobic activity
- During instruction (when physical distancing is in place)

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- *Can my child wear a mask that they bring from home?*

Yes. The School District will provide masks for students, but students are also expected to bring their own masks.

- *What happens if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?*

In the event that the District receives information related to a confirmed COVID-19 positive test result for a student or staff member, the District will immediately contact the County Department of Health to discuss the situation and will follow their guidance regarding the appropriate next steps, which may include quarantine of that student/staff member and/or additional students or staff members.

NEW AS OF SEPTEMBER 14:

- *Will parents be informed if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?*

In the event that a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the School District will communicate that finding to our parent community, after consultation with the County Department of Health to ensure that all confidentiality and privacy requirements are met.

- *How often will the classrooms be cleaned?*

At the Elementary School, classrooms will be thoroughly cleaned every day. Multiple-use spaces (e.g. cafeteria tables) will be cleaned between use of every group of students.

At the High School, student desks will be cleaned between every period when they have been used by students. Multiple-use spaces (e.g. cafeteria tables) will be cleaned between use of every group of students.

Other multiple-use materials, such as keyboards and calculators, will be wiped down between every student use.

- *How will the District provide for the required social distancing in schools?*

The District's hybrid model reduces the number of students attending school in-person each day by approximately 50%. Each classroom will be designed to provide social distancing between students at their seats. At the High School, locker access will be restricted to before school, during lunch, and after school, in order to reduce student hallway traffic between periods. Social distancing will also occur in the cafeteria through changes to the seating arrangement for each class.

- *Do you anticipate that the hybrid model will be in place for the entire 2020-2021 school year?*

The District's plans will continue to be guided by the health and safety requirements in place at the time. We plan to continually re-evaluate how our students are able to observe social distancing and safe practices while in school and on the bus, and if we are able to safely bring more students into our schools more often during the course of the school year, we will do so, in accordance with guidance from the Department of Health.

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NEW AS OF SEPTEMBER 14:

- *How is the District providing for the necessary ventilation in classrooms?*

The District has consulted with our Architectural/Engineering firm to review the best practices for ensuring that our existing ventilations are all operating as intended. In addition, the District has adjusted these systems to increase the amount of outside fresh air to the interior thereby increasing the circulation within the classrooms. Every air handling system has been checked to ensure that they are fully functional, with any necessary repairs being made, and a review of each air handling system by the District and the Architectural/Engineering firm will be ongoing.

Transportation:

- *Will my child's bus route change from prior years?*

The District is creating updated bus routes based upon the requirement for social distancing on the school bus. This means that fewer students will be on each route, and the routes themselves will likely change from prior years.

- *How often will the buses be cleaned?*

The District has collaborated with First Student, Inc. transportation, and First Student will ensure that the buses are cleaned on a daily basis.

- *Is social distancing required on the school bus?*

Yes. The Department of Health requires that social distancing be provided on every school bus. In order to accommodate for this requirement, each seat will be limited to one student, with the exception of family members who live together, who will be able to sit together in the same seat.

- *Are masks required on the school bus?*

Yes. The Department of Health requires that masks be worn at all times on every school bus.

- *What happens if my child forgets to bring their mask to the bus stop?*

The School District is collaborating with First Student, Inc. and will provide each bus with additional masks to be given to students in the event that they forget to bring one to the bus stop.

Teaching and Learning:

- *What is the difference between homeschooling, the hybrid program and fully at-home (remote) learning?*

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Homeschooling: Is a choice by parents to withdraw their child from public school registration and take on responsibility for schooling at home, either by paying for an on-line service or by using free materials to build a curriculum. In homeschooling, the District only monitors the student's progress (quarterly).

Hybrid Instruction: This is where students are coming to school 2 days per week and learning at home 3 days per week. It was created in order to balance the need for in-person learning with the need to create social distancing by reducing the density of students in the buildings by approximately 50% each day. The teachers adapt their existing curriculum so that students connect with them every day. Students will participate in synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. Synchronous learning is online learning that happens in real-time (live) such as a Zoom session with the teacher, whereas asynchronous learning occurs through online platforms without real-time interaction, such as a previously made instructional video. Teachers design their lessons and assessments so that all students work through the same materials over the course of a week. Time in school is often devoted to small group instruction and feedback opportunities that are difficult to reproduce virtually. Time at home may include an end-of-the-day live session with their teacher via Zoom, working independently with the material provided by the teacher on Schoology or Seesaw, or virtually partnering with a classmate for an assignment.

Remote-only or Fully At-Home Learning: "Remote-only" students would participate daily but remain at home 5 days per week. They would work through the same curriculum, but they may not always participate in activities designed to happen while in school. These activities may include small group instruction, individual student presentations and other activities designed to happen when students are in school. The students who are fully at-home DO NOT simply tune in and watch school from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm. Students work more independently when they are at home and can check-in with their teachers during designated times. Fully at-home learners will also be provided support by a team of teachers and teaching assistants throughout the school day hours.

- *Why is the District planning to adopt a hybrid model of in-person and at-home learning?*

The District is required to comply with the requirements set forth by the Department of Health and the State Education Department. Those requirements are extensive, and they include that social distancing of 6 feet or more be in place for students and staff while in school. The District is not able to socially-distance our 1100 students and 200 staff members in our schools every day, and so we decided that a hybrid schedule is the one which best meets the State requirements while providing our students with access to in-person instruction in the safest environment we can provide.

NEW AS OF SEPTEMBER 14:

- *Why isn't the District "livestreaming" the classroom instruction for students at home to view?*

The District chose not to require "livestreaming" of classroom instruction for several reasons. First, we don't believe that requiring students to be in front of their computer/device for hours every day to follow his/her regular instructional schedule is developmentally appropriate for young people. Beyond that, we know that many students who are learning at-home are doing

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so from a relative's house or other childcare provider's house, and to require students to be continually "logged-on" to livestream instruction would not be possible for many students. Additionally, livestreaming classroom instruction creates concerns regarding student privacy.

- *What will the at-home learning model look like for students who are receiving daily (5-day per week) at-home learning for each school?*

For Elementary School, we are planning for specific teachers and staff to be dedicated full-time to educating the Elementary School students who are planning to receive fully at-home instruction in the fall. Those teachers will collaborate with grade-level teachers to ensure that the on-line teachers provide appropriate grade-level curriculum. There will be daily synchronous (Zoom) sessions to provide instruction to students, followed by independent practice assignments and projects, which will be assessed in a similar fashion to those students who will be attending school in-person.

For High School, we are planning for the regularly assigned teacher for each course to be the teacher of record for the fully at-home learners. The teachers will post their instructional materials, assignments and assessments to Schoology, and the students learning fully at-home will have the same responsibilities as students learning partially in-person to complete the required course work. Support will be provided through regular synchronous (Zoom) sessions involving a teacher or member of the support staff, and the students will have regular access to their classroom teacher through scheduled synchronous (Zoom) sessions as well.

- *Will students learning at-home be required to follow their regular daily school schedule?*

No. The District is planning for the at-home learning program to include both scheduled synchronous (Zoom) sessions with teachers and support staff, as well as asynchronous independent practice activities (e.g. Schoology posts and responses, watching instructional support videos, reading, projects) for students to complete to demonstrate learning.

NEW AS OF SEPTEMBER 14:

- *Is an iPad sufficient for a student to fully access at-home instruction?*

While an iPad will allow students to access some of the online materials, a laptop or District-issued device is preferred.

- *Why are you planning for the in-person school day to end one hour early?*

The District recognizes that our students need to have regular access to their classroom teacher and other supports while they are learning at home. Knowing that our teachers cannot simultaneously teach the students in their classroom and support the students learning at home, the District has scheduled the in-person school day to end one hour early each day. This will allow for the final hour of each school day for teachers and staff to be used for online learning support for students.

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- *How will students be graded this school year?*

Students will be assessed using the standard assessment system that was used prior to the COVID-19 closures in March.

- *How will attendance be taken?*

When students are attending in-person instruction, attendance will be taken as normal by classroom teachers. When students are learning at-home, a “Check and Connect” system has been created where a faculty or staff member will call the student’s home to check on the student. If the student or family cannot be reached *and* the student is not participating online, the student will be marked absent.

- *How will special education services be provided?*

Students receiving special education services through any of the instructional models (In Person, Hybrid or At-Home) will receive specially-designed instruction from their Special Education Teachers aligned with their needs, in the Least Restrictive Environment. The Instructional Services Office and the Special Education staff will ensure that students who have IEPs are receiving education which is designed specifically to allow the students to make progress toward their IEP goals and demonstration of learning of instructional material.

NEW/UPDATED AS OF SEPTEMBER 14:

- *What is the status of athletics and other extracurricular activities for the fall?*

Section IX Athletics announced at the end of last week that sports will begin with the Winter Sports season on November 30. Their current plan allows for all three sports seasons to occur, from November 30 through the end of the school year. More detail can be found by using the link to their press release, which can be found here:

Other extracurricular activities are being reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Afterschool extracurricular activities will not be allowed to occur at the start of the school year. However, the District is working on a plan to allow for certain extracurricular activities to take place during the school day (at lunch) in the fall. We will share more information on this plan, and which activities would be able to take place, as the plan is finalized.

General:

- *How will lunch be provided to students when they are in school?*

Students will attend lunch with their classmates, as they have in the past. Meals will be provided by Food Service Workers wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), and students will be seated at cafeteria tables which have been reconfigured to provide for the necessary social distancing between students.

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- *How will meals be provided to students when they are learning at-home?*

As the District did during the school closures in the spring, we will be providing regular periods of time for families to come to the Elementary School to pick up “grab and go” meals for students. We will communicate the days and times for those “grab and go” meal periods later this summer.

- *What will be the first day of school?*

The District plans for the first day of school for students, both in-person and at-home learning, to be Thursday, September 10. The District plans to schedule Superintendent’s Conference Days on Thursday, September 3; Tuesday, September 8 and Wednesday, September 9. Those Conference Days will be used to provide health and safety training to staff, as well as training in at-home learning approaches and classroom arrangement to provide for social distancing.

- *My family doesn’t have access to the Internet at home. How can my child(ren) participate in at-home learning?*

If you do not have access to the Internet at home, please contact the Main Office of your child’s school.

NEW AS OF SEPTEMBER 14:

- *How will the District handle weather-related delayed openings and snow days?*

The District plans to handle these weather-related openings and snow days as we have in the past. If a snow day is called, schools will be closed, both for in-person and online instruction.

NEW AS OF SEPTEMBER 14:

- *Will there be Meet The Teacher Night?*

The District is considering an online Meet The Teacher Night, in lieu of the normal, in-person event. More information will be shared on this event when it is finalized.

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