

School Administrative Unit No. 7

21 Academy Street, Colebrook, New Hampshire 03576
603 / 237-5571 · 603 / 237-4961 · Fax: 603 / 237-5216

Debra J. Taylor, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
dtaylor@sau7.org

August 5, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope you are well, staying healthy and safe, and finding time and space to rest and enjoy the summer. This letter confirms that our school reopening plan for the 2020-21 school year was approved by the School Board on August 3. We intend to open schools for in person instruction for all students beginning September 8. We will provide full day programming.

Please be assured, our first priority is the health and safety of our students, staff members, families and communities. To this end, every effort is being made to ensure the safe operation of our schools as well as equitable and consistent learning opportunities for every student.

Our plan was developed by our school administration and staff representatives and incorporates the guidance from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Department of Education, as well as from the Centers for Disease Control.

As you might imagine, this entire process has been dynamic. Plans and decisions have to be made in real-time; they need to be aligned with current public health data and be both supportive and reasonable for everyone.

We are engaged in many preparations to ensure safety and assist our families and school staff as school resumes with in-person instruction this year.

- ★ We have incorporated CDC guidelines which will be required for both students and staff including daily health screening, social distancing of 6 feet apart in classrooms, masks in common areas (when not social distancing) and frequent sanitization of high touch areas during the school day.
- ★ Due to the need for detailed preparation and training this fall, the school board amended our 2020-21 school calendar to include additional professional development time prior to the start of the school year. As a result, school will resume on September 8.
- ★ Bus transportation will be provided as needed to and from school. Students will be seated one per seat and will be required to wear a mask while riding the bus.
- ★ School meals will be provided to our students either in the classroom or the cafeteria to ensure that we maintain social distancing.

- ★ We have purchased additional Chromebooks for our students that are expected by mid-fall so that all students in grades K-12 will have access to a device in school and at home.
- ★ The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) may be accessed by students whose parents prefer full remote instruction on a space available basis. While participating in this program, students remain enrolled in their local school. There is no cost for NH residents to participate in this program.
- ★ If your child has a medical need, they may be eligible for an accommodation. Please contact your school principal or counselor to explore options available to you.
- ★ Among our priorities we will be meeting the social-emotional needs of staff and students to ensure either a successful re-entry into our schools, or a return to distance/remote learning.
- ★ We are planning to provide additional counseling support for students this year as needed.
- ★ In order to protect our students and staff, parents and visitors are restricted from entering the building to appointment only. All visitors entering the building are required to wear a mask and complete a health screening.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic is a fluid situation and therefore our plans are subject to change. While our current plan is to start school within person instruction, if conditions change, revisions in schedules and alternate means to deliver instruction may occur. Therefore, we are also preparing for hybrid and remote instruction in the event that the conditions require that schools be fully or partially closed at a later date during the school year. Any decisions about future school closure will be made in consultation with the New Hampshire Health Department and the Commissioner of Education. Should this occur we will follow their guidance on steps to take and cooperate fully as they conduct contact tracing. In the event that a school, or all schools within the SAU, are in need of closing in order to clean and sanitize, we may need to convert to remote instruction on short notice for a short or long period of time.

I want to thank you for your understanding, cooperation, and support during these challenging times. Again, our goal is to be transparent throughout the reopening process and keep you informed as much as possible. **To assist us in planning, complete this survey (<https://forms.gle/Roy3PzpgVnA62t27>) by August 12.**

If you have any questions, please contact your school principal. Your commitment to our school community means so much!

We look forward to welcoming your children back to school on September 8th!

Sincerely,

Debra Taylor

Debra J. Taylor, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools