

Introduction

Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that public school districts in New York can follow plans to reopen for in-person schooling in September if COVID-19 infection rates stay at 5% or lower in a given region. WAJ crafted this reopening plan using stakeholder input with the goal of providing as much guidance as possible in anticipation of the start of our 2020-2021 school year.

New York State will make regional determinations about opening and closing schools as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. If a region is in Phase 4 and has a daily infection rate of 5% or lower over a 14-day average, schools in that region could hold in-person instruction. If daily infection rates exceed 9% over a seven-day average, however, schools in that region would not reopen. Similarly, should a region see such an average after reopening, schools in that region would also be directed to close.

WAJ will make daily determinations as to whether it is feasible to be open and provide in person instruction. Several factors could limit the District's ability to remain open and provide in-person instruction. It is possible that we may need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from state agencies, stay-at-home orders from the Governor and/or local situations impacting safety. The level of infection, the spread of the virus and response to the disease in our community will influence decisions on closure. Additionally, several other factors may also influence such a decision, including but not limited to: availability of bus drivers, availability of teachers, and availability of internet service, availability of PPE and sanitation materials, weather and student attendance.

While all public school districts have been instructed by the NYSED and New York State to prioritize efforts to return students to in-person instruction to the extent practical, the District is also planning to provide remote/distance learning. A hybrid model that combines in-person instruction and remote learning is planned for September. Parents will have the choice to remain in the remote learning model if they elect to do so. If school is closed, instruction will be provided remotely. **ALL PARENTS MUST BE PREPARED FOR ALL REMOTE LEARNING.**

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel as comfortable and safe returning to school campus as possible. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

Mrs. Lara McAneny, Assistant Superintendent, working closely with Gabrielle Gonzalez, WAJ School Nurse, will serve as the District's COVID-19 Coordinator. Mrs. McAneny and Mrs. Gonzalez will work closely with our local health department, the District's medical director and other related agencies. Mrs. McAneny will serve as a central contact for schools and stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members and will ensure the district is in compliance and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines. Mrs. McAneny can be contacted at lmcaneny@wajcs.org and her contact information will be posted on our website.