

NEW BRIGHTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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October 2, 2020

Dear New Brighton Area School District Families,

First and foremost, please accept our thanks for your continued support and patience as we traverse this new landscape of education. While the start of this school year has been anything but normal, our students and staff have risen to the occasion and are doing amazing things in the virtual environment. During the first few weeks of school we have continued to monitor the local health data, requirements from the PA Department of Health (PADOH) and PA Department of Education (PDE), and the successes and challenges faced by all schools as they have implemented various types of reopening strategies. Our goals have been simple and consistent from the start; to focus on the safety and health of our students, staff, and community; and to provide a consistent and quality education to all students. While those goals are not that different than what we would aim for in any given school year, they serve to be more challenging within our current landscape.

I am writing today to let you know that we are planning to shift from our current Virtual Model into a transitional model that welcomes students back into the school buildings. The data provided in our recent survey shows that parents are ready for their children to return to the school buildings and we know our staff cannot wait to have their students in front of them. We are prepared to enter this transitional phase with a keen focus on the health of everyone while providing a consistent and quality education to all students. Our students will make a staggered entry into this model beginning October 21 – 23 for students in Grades K through 5, and then on October 26 for students in Grades 6 through 12. There are additional details contained later in this announcement and a slide show with additional information will be posted to the Coronavirus page of our website.

Transitional Model for 2020 – 2021

We have made the decision to reopen our school buildings under a Hybrid Model. This model will look different in our buildings and is designed to meet the needs of our students at all levels.

New Brighton Elementary School & New Brighton Middle School – All students will attend school Monday through Friday for a partial day. The New Brighton Elementary School will attend from 8:30 am through 12:30 pm and the New Brighton Middle School will attend from 8:00 am through 12:00 pm. Information on bus arrival/departure will be shared in the coming week. Students will participate in their classes, see their teachers, and experience their key learning in school and then return home for extensions, homework, and further practice. All students will leave school with a lunch. We believe this model gets our learners back where they need to be with our teachers and in school together. We hope to expand this into a full day as the requirements we must meet from the PA DOH and PDE are changed in the future.

New Brighton High School - This model will involve our students being split into two cohorts-Group A and Group B in all grades 9 through 12. This will allow us to maintain approximately 50% of our population in the building at any given time. Students in Group A will attend school in-person on Monday and Tuesday, and students in Group B will attend school in-person on Thursday and Friday.

Days are subject to change as we finalize plans. When not attending school in-person, students will be expected to log-in and live stream with their classes as their classmates attend school in-session. This allows all students to participate in their classes, live. We will use Wednesday as a virtual learning day for all students. Students will attend school from 7:30 – 1:30 each day. We are ending our day 1-hour early so our teachers can host office hours in the afternoon and our students who were at home that day, live streaming, will have an opportunity to connect with their teacher to ask questions, get help, etc. Our students who were in school will go home 1-hour early with the expectation that they complete extended independent work. We expect our Group A and Group B students to remain relatively unchanged from the information you previously received this summer, however as we review our plans from this summer for building and transportation balance, we may see some changes and we plan to communicate with families and students in the coming week.

Cyber/Online Education

We recognize that some families may desire a fully virtual education and do not wish to return to in-person learning at this time. Our new models will accommodate that desire. In the New Brighton Elementary and New Brighton Middle School, our teachers will use the time in the afternoon to connect with those students who are remaining home in a full virtual environment. The students will complete the same course work on Schoology as their classmates who are attending in-person, so they will be on pace with their learning for a smooth transition when they feel a return is appropriate. Our students at New Brighton High School will be able to live stream each day, also remaining on pace with their in-school classmates and completing assignments on Schoology. We believe that these models will serve our families well if they wish to keep their child(ren) home in a continued full virtual environment. There will be a need for the family to continue supporting their child in his/her learning, but we will have time each day to connect and provide instruction via our teachers.

School Calendar

The School Calendar will not be changed. We will transition directly into this model and we are planning to use Full Virtual instruction in place of snow days if/when the weather dictates.

Further Information

We will continue to utilize the Coronavirus Page of our website to post information and updates. We will send out School Messenger and Social Media messages when new information is posted and we will keep our families up-to-date as we move ahead.

Once again, we thank you for your support in this process. We know that there is not a solution that works for everyone and we hope you will stand with us as we navigate these waters and make decisions in the best interest of our entire school community. Your children, our students, are our most important priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph A. Guarino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Joseph A. Guarino, Ed.D
Superintendent