

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4
CHESTER • DEEP RIVER • ESSEX



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Dear Parents and Guardians

As we conclude the first month of school, I am pleased to share with you that our system wide efforts to reopen have been a success. We are now actively preparing to begin the next phase of our reopening plans. On Tuesday, October 13th, all students in the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 schools will return to full, in-person learning five days a week. It has always been our plan to reopen in full. In July, I communicated with you about the directive from the State of Connecticut for all schools to reopen in full this fall ([Parent and Staff Letter - 07/24/20](#)). After several discussions with our Reopening Committees and BOE(s) over the summer, we made the decision to utilize the option of the hybrid model for the purpose of a gradual reopening of our schools ([Letter to Communities - 08/04/20](#)).

This approach afforded us the opportunity to implement multiple new health and safety measures in our schools; to allow for staff professional development and student training; and to acclimate everyone to new measures and protocols in a safe controlled manner, while being able to assess the effectiveness of our initial plans. Our experiences these first few weeks have given us the confidence in our planning to reopen in full.

It will be important for parents to note that the practices we have worked conscientiously to implement during these first weeks of school will all remain in effect. We will continue to implement all the mitigation strategies that have been recommended by our public health experts including: cleaning protocols, mitigation strategies (mask use, maintaining appropriate distancing, and hand hygiene) Social distancing in the classrooms will vary by individual classroom across our five schools. It is important for everyone to be aware that with full, in-person learning, the distance between student desks will be decreased, compared with the current hybrid model which allows class sizes of approximately 50% of the scheduled seats in each classroom. Our cohort model in grades Pre K-8 will continue, however student groups A and B that were used during our hybrid model will merge into single classroom based groups.

Parents will continue to have the option of their child participating in full remote learning. We ask that families who wish to either continue, or begin this option notify their child's principal as soon as possible to aid with our planning.

As of the date of this letter, the COVID-19 metrics for our part of the state support our efforts to go forward as planned with a full reopening. Moving forward, our district will continue to rely on the metrics ([School Learning Model Indicators](#)) provided by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health to monitor infection rate data in our region, as well as consultation with the DPH and our local health authorities to make any whole system decisions about the need to revert to a district wide hybrid model or to close all buildings, such as during the spring of last year.

Should the need arise to quarantine a cohort of students, or close an individual building due to concerns about isolated cases(s) of COVID-19 in our schools, we will follow the same protocol we used when we temporarily closed and reopened VRHS a few weeks ago. ([Contact Tracing Decision Tree](#))

Your child's building principal will be in communication with you early next week with more detailed information about what to expect at your school.

On behalf of the faculty and staff of the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 Schools, we thank you for the trust you have placed in all of us as we have worked to provide your child with the best educational experience, in the safest manner possible, during such uncertain times. Your support and understanding has been greatly appreciated by all of us, and your partnership is essential to our continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brian J. White".

Brian J. White
Superintendent of Schools