

Date 5/15/20

Dear Team,

I hope all is well for you and yours.

I am writing to you today to begin our discussion in East Hartford of our next steps as we look towards recovery and the resumption of full-scale district operations. From the onset of COVID-19, we have carefully followed the direction of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as guidance from the Office of the Governor, Commissioner of Education, Mayor and local Department of Health Officials. We have acted quickly, decisively and with the protection of the health of our students, our faculty and our community as our priority. I am extremely proud of the approach we have taken in these unprecedented times and appreciative of your efforts to work together.

As a district we have actively launched our district recovery conversation and planning. At this point, we have three separate paths that we are fully vetting and exploring as we respond to an ever-evolving situation.

1. **Resume Normal Operations:** Known in other terms as “Business as Usual” this planning focus put’s a pin on the map ahead (Fall 2020) as if we would return to school under traditional conditions. This work is extremely important as it sets the baseline for modifications. While this plan includes important safeguards such as an additional focus on handwashing, hygiene, modified social distancing, i.e. avoiding large groups/assemblies (very similar to our situation when we closed school prior to 3/12), this planning does not include the drastic modifications currently getting significant media and political attention.
2. **Distance Learning Operations:** Known in other terms as “Current Status,” this planning focus allows us to consider a Fall 2020 start with students learning from home. In this format, heavy points of emphasis are placed on getting our district 1:1 with technology as well as providing our staff with needed training to better teach as remote instructors.
3. **Contingency Planning:** Known in other terms as “Speculative and Exploratory,” this planning reviews international and national level research on how school systems are facing recovery from a variety of schedules, formats and timelines. To assist in this process, my Cabinet Team will be identifying key stakeholders (logistics, academic, community) who can provide important details and information and vetting multiple options.

Following the guidance of the Reopen Connecticut Advisory Group formed by Governor Lamont, we will participate in the Phase One guidance by designating the East Hartford Public School district as “open” on May 20th. We are excited to take this new step and believe that by strategically making small incremental changes we can begin the journey back to the “normal” we so desperately miss.

In this new status, we will initially maintain the current working conditions that we have set with each employee in terms of expectation and work location status. While some employee groups who cannot accomplish their work from home will return to the district following guidelines from health and safety officials, the vast majority of our employees will maintain current work from home status.

In this first phase, EHPS administration and supervisors will begin evaluating work flows/district needs and begin building schedules for employees to return to more traditional operations. As we begin this process, you may notice rotations of days required to report to work and changes in office locations as we practice appropriate levels of social distancing. In all of these measures we will prioritize the health of our employees and value your input into how we can best provide the services and work required for district operations.

While we sincerely have appreciated the overwhelming support and understanding our district has shown throughout the closure, re-opening the district will require new levels of flexibility and collaboration. To that end, I personally appreciate your continued spirit of professionalism and commitment to the work that makes a difference for our kids and community.

Be well,



Nathan D. Quesnel
East Hartford Public Schools