

East Haddam Public Schools

Brian S. Reas, Superintendent of Schools

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August 7, 2020

Dear Families,

I sincerely hope this email finds you well. I cannot believe I am sending out this message at a time when many of us do not have power in our homes. At the same time, I know that parents are anticipating this letter from previous communications that occurred prior to the tropical storm. Please know that I fully understand that you may need to wait until your power is restored next week in order to complete the survey referenced in this email. We had planned to have a Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, August 4 and a Zoom call on Thursday, August 6 this week to share more information with you and receive your input prior to this letter, unfortunately, the tropical storm forced us to cancel these plans for communication and conversation.

As of today, the current drafts of all three schools' reopening plans are available on the website at www.easthaddamschools.org. I need to emphasize that they continue to be in a draft form as additional guidance is shared from the Connecticut State Department of Education, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, and the Chatham Health Department on a daily basis.

East Haddam Public Schools is planning to open in Level 1 at all three schools. Level 1 supports 100% of students to attend 'In Person' learning with the option for parents to choose for their student to attend via remote learning at home. A survey link is available at the end of this letter for parents to inform the district about this choice and their preferences with transportation. Please review the survey content below before taking the survey. The survey asks that you choose between in-person and remote learning to start the school year. We understand that situations may arise that change your choice and we remain committed to being flexible. The dates of October and December for return to school from remote learning are just guidelines to assist in our re-opening planning.

Having communicated with many superintendents in the region, I know that there are a variety of reopening strategies being implemented. I want to share with you some of the factors that influence this decision for East Haddam. First, our relatively small school enrollment gives East Haddam an advantage over many of our neighboring districts in the area of student cohorts. East Haddam is able to cohort students grades K-8 with less than 20 students. At the high school, with the anticipated 70% return of students to 'In Person' learning, we are able to cohort our students by 50 students or less. Secondly, we anticipate, from experience and previous survey results, that less than 50% of our students will use bus transportation. Finally, our school buildings are all sized for more students than are currently enrolled and this additional space is extremely helpful in planning for reopening.

I am fully aware that there is no plan that is perfect for every student and family. Many factors were considered in this decision. The current rates of COVID for our town and county are in the Low Risk Level according to the State of Connecticut. In the 7 days prior to this past Monday, August 3, 2020, our county experienced 1.1 new cases of COVID per 100,000 residents. The Low risk category as determined by the State of Connecticut includes areas with up to 10 new cases per 100,000 population. For the document with this information, please visit our COVID Resource page on the district website www.easthaddamschools.org.

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Check us out at: www.easthaddamschools.org

Connect with us @easthaddamsd



Please review on the district website, the district and school plan(s) that applies to your child(ren) before completing the survey. We will use the survey data to plan for the reopening of schools. This is a very unique and complex decision for families to make. In the event that you change your decision about the option you made regarding remote learning or transportation after completing the survey, please contact the school principal to communicate this change as soon as possible.

The first day of school for students is Tuesday, September 1, 2020. We are making preparations for the safest reopening possible. In addition to creating these plans, prior to September 1, we are supporting our staff with training on the implementation of the plan August 26, 27, 28, and 31. We continue to fine tune our remote learning abilities from our experiences and knowledge gained in the spring of 2020.

Finally, if you have questions about the reopening plans of schools, please email the appropriate school principal. Our phones and many of our staff email continue to be affected by the storm damage. The central office phone is still limited from the impact of the storm. School phones are in the process of being restored. The Board of Education will be holding a Special Meeting on Wednesday, August 12 at 5pm. We will send out details as soon as possible.

The tropical storm is just one more challenge that we will overcome together. Please continue to reach out with any questions or concerns and stay safe.

Sincerely,



Brian S. Reas
Superintendent of Schools
East Haddam Public School

For link to survey: <https://forms.gle/hAtnnv2rzUPWLNDx8>

Survey Questions:

Emails will be automatically collected

Name and relationship of person completing the survey

Section 1: Student Information, Please complete 1 survey per child

Name, School and Grade level (for Fall 2020)

With Level 1, 100% In-School: (You may change your option at any time)

- Choice:
- Sending this student to school for in-person learning
 - Remote-Learning through October
 - Remote-Learning through December

Section 2: Transportation:

Information on how your student will come to and from school each day. We ask you review the district and school plans on details regarding transportation.

Section 3: Comments (Optional)

Please let us know if the district changes to a hybrid model, would your choice change

Please let us know if you need assistance with WiFi

Please let us know why you choose remote learning model.

Please feel free to add any comments or questions