

# SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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D R E A M . A C H I E V E . I N S P I R E .

July 27, 2020

Dear Families:

Attached is a DRAFT of the 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan that was submitted to the State Department of Education on Friday afternoon. While we have been directed to call it a “plan,” I think it would be more accurate to describe it as an “informational document.” That is why the document is labeled as a DRAFT because the information that school district superintendents are receiving changes daily. The content of the document will change as new guidance and information becomes available. I hope sharing with you what we know today is helpful to families.

We understand that it is challenging for parents and caregivers to digest a 20-page document. We are sharing the entire draft plan to ensure that everyone has access to our full working draft. We want to assure families that principals will be following up regularly with school-specific communications that will be easier for parents to digest. The communications from principals will be timely and targeted with the goal of being clear and succinct to assist parents in accessing the information they need to know.

With full candor, I must share with you a growing concern. In the coming days and weeks I expect the frequency with which you will hear the following words and phrases at press conferences to increase. Words such as “flexibility,” and phrases such as “avoid one-size fits all” and “local control,” may signal a backing away from a state level decision as to how to safely open schools (fully open, hybrid, or full distance). It will likely be pointed out that what works for a school district with fewer than 200 students does not work for a school district with over 20,000 students. While this may be true, it is not a justification for abandoning consistent directives based on the state level expertise that school districts need to open safely. This is also important as we strive for equitable outcomes for all students across Connecticut.

I do not share this concern to be judgmental or critical of any one person or governmental organization; I truly believe everyone is doing the best they can right now. There are no easy answers, but I am confident we will arrive at better answers if we continue to have a statewide approach and work in a coordinated fashion. Please know that if the state announces that it will be a local decision to determine under which instructional model schools will open, we will at least try to coordinate with neighboring school districts in the Hartford area to the degree that is possible. I sincerely hope my concern is unwarranted, but I feel it is important to share it with you.

Tomorrow you will receive an email from your child’s principal asking you to complete the Reopening Registration Form through PowerSchool no later than August 7<sup>th</sup>. The form asks you to respond to two questions. In addition to a question about bus transportation, you will be asked to decide if your child will learn at school or from home. I recognize this is a difficult decision for many families, but your responses will provide critical information for our planning so we can safely welcome back your children to school or support their learning from home.

**A final thought about taking care of each other...**

In addition to worrying about your children's health and safety, many of you have expressed your concern for the wellbeing of adults who will be charged with keeping your children safe at school. I can assure you that it is not only your sons and daughters for whom we take this charge seriously, it is also for the sons and daughters who work in our buildings whose parents want the same thing for their child. Whether you are the parent of a five-year-old student or the parent of a 45-year-old teacher, please know our genuine care and concern extends to everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "KATE CARTER". The letters are in a cursive, slightly slanted font.

Kate Carter, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools