



July 31, 2020

Dear WTSD families,

We hope that you have been enjoying your summer, even though it looks a bit different this year. Instead of traveling, perhaps there are more backyard BBQ's and time spent together at a slower pace. Different can take getting used to... but it can be positive.

As we look forward to welcoming our families back to school this fall, we recognize how different the school environment will feel. With that being said, the School Reopening Committee has spent countless hours working on a return plan that embraces normalcy while prioritizing the health and safety of staff and students.

The NJ Department of Education released "The Road Back" on June 26, 2020 outlining a general framework for reopening schools (<https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/>). Some of the essentials points of the NJ DOE plan include:

- NJ Schools will open in some capacity for in-person instruction and must include necessary precautions to protect the health and welfare of our students and staff and must be able to be adjusted should the spread of COVID-19 require it.
- Hours of instructional time are not being defined as a student's time in front of a teacher or in front of a computer screen, but rather by the time engaged in standards-based learning under the guidance or direction of a teacher.
- Re-opening plans must support in-person learning and provide families an option for all remote learning.

WTSD will be utilizing a full return to physical school Monday – Friday with regular school hours. To begin the school year, in-person learning will start with a period of early dismissals before transitioning to a full day schedule. The initial period of early dismissals will allow for a transition period for students, as well as a necessary training time for staff members. Note, before/after care will not be available and no in person afterschool activities or clubs, to begin the school year. These programs and activities will be reconsidered, throughout the school year, dependent on current pandemic circumstances. Lunch, recess and transition times will be modified to comply with social distancing. Academics will take place in an established classroom; there will be no changing classes and each desk will have a 3-way plastic protector to allow for students to follow instruction and complete work with masks (small breaks may be taken when students are seated behind the plastic protector).

A safe return to school is vital to our children's overall well-being. We know that school provides more than academics. It is where our children learn social and emotional skills, get regular exercise, have access to mental health resources and healthy meals and just get to be kids. In looking at return to school options, a split schedule based on ½ days or every other day did not make sense for a variety of reasons. Keeping in mind our elementary population, it is critical for our students to have a physical place to go while parents are returning to work outside of the home. We are fortunate in WTSD that we have the space and resources available to provide this option to our families.

Please note, while we are sharing the School Reopening Plan with families today, changes or additions to the plan may be required by the New Jersey Department of Education and / or the Department of Health. If school reopening plans are modified, additional updates will be sent to families.

Parents/Guardians are asked to review the School Reopening Plan (link below) and determine which option (In-person Learning Option or Full Remote Learning Option) works best for their family. If you would like to have your child participate in the Full Remote Learning Option, please click on the link below and complete the remote learning form. Also, if families do not plan to use school provided transportation, they are asked to complete the Transportation Waiver Form (link below). The transportation waiver form should be emailed to Rachael Rhinehart at rrhinehart@washtwpsd.org. To assist with scheduling, we ask that these forms be completed by Friday, August 7, 2020. Thank you for your assistance in these matters.

[WTSD District Reopening Plan 7-31-2020](#) [WTSD Remote Learning Option Form](#) [Transportation Waiver Form 2020-2021](#)

Information regarding student homeroom teachers and schedules will be included in our Back-to-School mailing in August.

Sincerely,

Keith Neuhs, Superintendent

