

August 7, 2020

Dear Newtown Families,

I know everyone is facing immense challenges due to the storm, and please know that any and all messages will continue to be available for you to access when you can. We will continue to post on our website and have pushed the timeline for the **survey (link in this letter)** to accommodate your needs.

We have spent a great deal of time considering the safest model for reopening of schools in the fall. Our administrative team reviewed the new provision from the Governor and the State Department of Education, which allowed for flexibility in returning to school in either a 100% all-in model or Hybrid Model. After careful deliberation, and based on numerous factors including safety, staffing, and the implementation of all health protocols and mitigation strategies, Newtown Public Schools will begin the 2020-21 school year in a Hybrid Model. This was discussed at a special BOE meeting yesterday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, and staff and administrators will begin to finalize back-to-school plans and preparation. Our goal is to bring all students back in full if positive conditions are sustained and we are able to remain compliant with all health and safety protocols: K-6 by October 5 and 7-12 by November 1.

The Board of Education previously approved our Re-Entry Plan, including all three models: 100% in-person, Hybrid, or Full Distance Learning. As we discussed at that time, staff and parents must be ready for the move to any one of these models based on changing health conditions in our community. In concert with other districts in our region and across the State, the Hybrid Model strives to align with CDC Guidelines for physical distancing and enhanced cohorting (grouping of students who remain together as much as possible). The Western CT Superintendents' group worked collaboratively to embrace a common Hybrid Model in order to accommodate staff who may have children attending other schools. The Hybrid Model outlined **below** is included in both our Re-Entry Plan and in the Health & Safety Emergency Instructional Plan sent out by Anne Uberti, Assistant Superintendent.

Hybrid Model					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Hybrid Model	Students in Cohort A report to school for on-site learning while students in Cohort B participate in remote learning.	Students in Cohort A report to school for on-site learning while students in Cohort B participate in remote learning.	<b>Wellness Wednesday</b> Schools are closed to allow for weekly deep cleaning.  Teaching and learning continue for all students remotely.	Students in Cohort B report to school for on-site learning while students in Cohort A participate in remote learning.	Students in Cohort B report to school for on-site learning while students in Cohort A participate in remote learning.

Operating in a Hybrid Model is in the best interest of the health and safety of students, staff and families. This will reduce the density of our populations in classrooms, hallways, and public spaces in our buildings. With only 50% in attendance on any given day, students and staff will be able to practice and apply all health safety measures to achieve a safe learning environment with

the intent of moving toward a full in-person model. However, families still have the option to select a full remote learning model for their children.

The Newtown Community Center will be offering a program called Return 2 Learn – Distance Learning Tutoring Program during the day for working staff and families. This program will be offered to students in grades K-6 and provide small group support and supervision of students' remote learning in a safe, monitored environment. Please reach out to the Newtown Community Center or visit their website for further information.

NYA Sports & Fitness will be offering a weekday program to support the current Newtown schools' learning model this fall. The program will be a blend of monitored distance learning support and scheduled physical activity. This resource is aimed to support both children and parents through these evolving times. Further information will be released on [nyasportsfitness.com](http://nyasportsfitness.com).

### **Important Survey**

After reviewing all of the information related to the Hybrid Model and health safety protocols that will be implemented, please complete the following **survey** by noon on Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup>: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPLTm5eWbYfs78CSbM4TAbWqbgTwyqCV7qrRl3Rxl\\_Qg3oKQ/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPLTm5eWbYfs78CSbM4TAbWqbgTwyqCV7qrRl3Rxl_Qg3oKQ/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1)

*The survey also asks about transportation and technology needs. If you do not respond, we will assume that you will be sending your child/children back to school in the fall.*

Our staff and administrative team are working diligently to open our schools safely. During the week of August 17<sup>th</sup>, you will be receiving information about your child's cohort. In addition, information about Kindergarten orientation, walkthroughs, and Freshman Orientation will be sent from each building leader.

Thank you,

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent