

Letter from Superintendent

Parent Update

August 6, 2021

Dear Dobbs Ferry Parents and Community,

I imagine that this has been a better summer than last year and I hope that you are enjoying these days with family and friends. I also imagine that with September right around the corner, parents are anxious about what to expect for their children when schools open again. We have all learned a lot in the past 18 months and we are proud that we were able to keep our Dobbs Ferry schools open all of the last school year and that we successfully returned to full in-person learning in April. We were able to provide a safe and secure school environment in our classrooms and our buildings and we were able to manage all of the daily details of operating our schools in a pandemic. I know that all of us were hoping that COVID-19 would be in our rearview mirror by now but it is clear that we still have a journey ahead.

I will be sharing regular updates as we move closer to the start of school. Unfortunately, with the increased impact of the Delta Variant regionally and nationally, educators once again have to plan for a school year with COVID-19. We are convening a subcommittee of our Reopening Schools Task Force on Monday, August 9th to review and discuss some of the issues outlined below.

What We Know Now

Dobbs Ferry students will be returning on September 9th with a full-return to in-person instruction for all students, grades K-12. We will be fully in-person all day, every day.

We will not be offering a Hybrid or Remote Learning option with the exception of students who are in school ordered quarantine due to documented exposure of a confirmed, positive case of COVID-19.

State and county guidance will continue to inform our planning. Last year, we operated with the guidance and support of our school medical director and state and county agencies which provided guidance tied to requirements from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

and [American Academy of Pediatrics](#). COVID-19 is a public health and medical concern, requiring us as educators to work within the expertise provided by federal, national, state and county public health and medical authorities.

Late Wednesday the NYS Department of Health announced that it would not be providing schools with guidance on how to address COVID-19. We have been informed that the NYS Education Department, as well as the Westchester County Department of Health, will be providing guidance in the coming week. We know that the guidance will be based on the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.

Regional School District Coordination has been critical over the past 18 months and we are fortunate to have a strong relationship with our Westchester County school districts and especially with the Quad Village Districts. Superintendents have been meeting this week to coordinate plans for addressing COVID-19, and will be meeting in the upcoming week to discuss the guidance anticipated from the NYS Department of Education and Westchester County to resolve specific plans for mitigating COVID-19 spread.

What We Are Working to Resolve

Here is a list of the issues currently under review.

- Quarantines and Contact Tracing
- Masks and Face Coverings
- Physical Distancing
- Vaccination Guidelines for Staff and Students
- Surveillance Testing for Staff and Students
- Lunch and Meal Procedures
- Ventilation and Facility Cleaning/Disinfection
- Busing Procedures
- Building and District Visitors

Our successful strategies from last year can be found in our [Reopening Schools Plan](#). We anticipate that many of these procedures and protocols will remain in place as we begin school

in September. Reviews and possible updates to these plans may be necessary due to the shifting nature of COVID-19.

Despite the challenges that remain ahead, we are excited and optimistic about the 2021-2022 school year. I am confident that by continuing to work as partners with parents, public health officials and our Westchester schools colleagues, we can open our schools and stay open so that all Dobbs Ferry students can continue to enjoy the high-quality educational experience that is the cornerstone of our community.

Sincerely,

Lisa Brady, Ed.D.
Superintendent