



COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Jason Q. Harris, Ph.D.
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June 9, 2020

Dear Wildcat Family:

In my year-end letter, I outlined three possible scenarios for the 2020-2021 school year. At last week's school board meeting, I informed the Board of Trustees that the Columbia School District administration's goal was to open the 2020-2021 school year as "normal" as possible on August 3. We realize this intention will come with significant obstacles, and we want you to know that we are striving daily to overcome each one. Numerous questions remain, and August 3 is still a long way away.

As a part of the plan to reopen schools, the Columbia School District is convening a community committee to discuss the methods of CSD reopening. The formation of this committee will occur in the upcoming weeks. The areas of consideration will focus on the following:

- Academic Programming -Scheduling and daily time operations to determine the need for required flexibility should a short-term shutdown occur with an analysis of the impact on the family, community, local businesses, and the School District.
- Operations Programming - Building preparation for faculty, staff, and student arrival.
- Transportation Department- operations complying with CDC guidelines at the start of school, and as the school year moves on. The CSD will send a survey to parents, requesting how many will be seeking their child to be transported by address, grade level, and school building to assist the CSD Transportation Department. CSD Transportation Department will develop a plan for the District to follow as we work our way through the school year.
- Food Services-review the intention to feed students in their classrooms. Everyday area/ Cafeteria eating will be suspended in the beginning to better provide social distancing for our students and staff. Contingencies to move to standard eating plans will be developed should CDC guidelines allow common area grouping.
- Community Communication- CSD will continue to build upon its communication system to keep families aware of all issues of COVID-19, and the impact on the operations of the school district. A method of confidential notification from parents to the school and from school to parents will ensure information of contact with positive testing results. Awareness will help the School District and the Community of Columbia maintain as safe an environment as possible. The CSD is preparing training and methods to improve distance learning should the need arise on a short- or long-term basis.
- Protocols for student and parent entry are under development and will be provided to the Community to explain how students will enter and leave the facility at all times. Facial coverings will be suggested to be worn as a part of the protocol and will continue until the CDC and MSDH guidelines recommend change. As CDC guidelines and Governor mandates allow, all protocols will be adjusted. The CSD Community will receive continued communications of all adjustments.

The CSD will continue daily monitoring of the impact of COVID-19 in the Columbia School District area and surrounding counties that could affect the families, faculty, staff, and students of CSD. The District will work closely with the Marion County Health Department and the Mississippi Department of Health as we navigate the

school year. Plans for all extra-curricular events and daily operations will be a continual process of review and adjusted based on the best method to provide for the safety of our Community.

I realize that summer break just started, and the start of school may not be on everyone's mind at the moment. However, I want to assure you that it is on the mind of every administrator in the Columbia School District. In closing, we realize a lot of questions remain, and information changes daily. Please know that we are focused on providing the safest possible learning environment for all students.

I trust you are having a relaxing summer, and I look forward to sharing information with you as it becomes available.

As a reminder, regular updates will be available via the web at:

<https://www.columbiaschools.org/covid-19>

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Q. Harris".

Jason Q. Harris, Ph.D.
Superintendent