

May 20, 2020

Update from Dr. Derek Arrowood, Superintendent, Hamilton Heights School Corporation

As we see positive momentum of reopening our state, we are hopeful for a return to some sense of normalcy. Even with the excitement and anticipation of summer break upon us, I know the question on most of your minds is, *“What will the fall look like?”* This is a question every district in every community is facing.

I can simply say we are looking forward to getting back to business and into the classrooms this fall. Tuesday, August 11 will be the first day of instruction for students. This has been the day scheduled to start back to school for the 2020-21 year prior to the stay at home mandates implemented in March to slow the spread of COVID-19.

As we plan for this fall, we are also taking the opportunity to learn from this disruption. While distance learning has been challenging for some, other students are thriving. We are thinking about how we can incorporate new learning models and innovations that engage students by their individual strengths and needs. We are asking, how can schools be better and more equitable than before?

We are grounded in our promise, mission, and the foundation of our strategic plan. Our plans will prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff, focus on our collective and individual social-emotional well-being, and accelerate learning for all students. I believe school remains the best place for student learning. While state and federal public health authorities will determine when and to what extent schools can reopen, as our state moves through its reopening stages we are optimistic our schools will reopen as scheduled.

We can't wait for the fall and for our families to see all the positive changes that have taken place throughout our buildings and learning spaces over the past several months in anticipation of the 2020-21 school year. We have been fortunate that we could keep these projects on track, and in some cases, ahead of schedule, throughout the past few months.

The decision to allow summer conditioning beginning July 1, followed the Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Jennifer McCormick's clarification that June 30 marked the end of the defined 2019-20 school year. However, we know that the annual moratorium week has been sacred to our families over the years. Therefore, summer conditioning at the high school will begin on Monday, July 6.

On a side note, The Indiana Department of Education has created a section on its website, COVID-19 Resources for Indiana Schools, which is continually updated with valuable resources and links. I am sharing this because some of the information and resources would be beneficial to our families as well. Please take a moment to check it out at: <https://www.doe.in.gov/covid-19>

I'll check in again a couple of times over the summer to keep you in the loop with news and the start of school information. In the meantime, I want to leave you with this thought: *Within every struggle is the opportunity for growth. If anyone can come through this pandemic stronger than before, we can, because #WeAreHuskies.* Stay safe and continue to look after one another as a community.