

June 24, 2020

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

I trust this message finds you enjoying your summer break and finding time to rest, relax, and recharge. It feels liberating to reemerge and enjoy some traditional summer activities and freedoms that were placed on pause for the greater good.

Closing schools in the spring was hard. We knew reopening in the fall would not be any easier. However, as Indiana moves toward Stage 5 of its Roadmap to Reopening we are readying to roll out our scheduled calendar for the 2020-21 school year. Tuesday, August 11 is our first day of student instruction and as of this writing we intend to have in-class instruction daily for the entire school year.

We understand the start of school will look different than it did in 2019 and we need to be prepared to embrace a new reality to stay open. This includes adhering to the recommended physical distancing and safety protocols while continuing to follow prevention measures to reduce the spread of viruses both inside and outside the classroom.

Hamilton County Schools have been working together to unpack the Indiana Department of Education's IN-CLASS (Indiana's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools) guidelines for reopening. Our Hamilton Heights re-entry task force is comprised of some 30 faculty, staff, and representatives of our local health department. They are hard at work charting a path to the school year ahead with the safety, security, health and well-being of our students and staff as the top priority.

While I believe school remains the best place for student learning, there were valuable takeaways from the disruption. By incorporating new learning models and innovations that enhance learning, we made our schools better and more equitable for everyone. Public education and our educators proved to be a bright light and beacon of hope during some dark and difficult days. As we shore up our plan to reopen our buildings, we will share with you an update on July 8 and our final plan on July 15.

Last week, the Hamilton Heights School Board unanimously approved a transition to a 1-Tier Transportation plan with adjusted school start times beginning in the fall of 2021. This culminated a more than yearlong process of review, research, work sessions, presentations, meetings, discussions, thoughts, opinions, and input from members throughout our district. I am proud of our board and our community who worked together to ensure a decision that makes good sense for our district and that will have a positive impact on student learning for many years to come.

Moving forward, we thank you for your continued confidence and support. We will press on, prioritizing the health and safety of our students and staff and accelerate learning opportunities for all students with or without a pandemic around us. #WeAreHuskies