



NORRISTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent
Administration Building
401 N. Whitehall Rd.
Norristown, PA 19403

Christopher T. Dormer, Superintendent of Schools

July 1, 2020

Dear Norristown Area School District Community:

I am writing to provide everyone with an update on our process for the planned reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year this fall. I want to emphasize that no final decisions have been made at this time, guidance from local, state, and federal agencies is frequently being updated. We recently received new guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and are anticipated county-specific guidance from the Montgomery County Office of Public Health in the very near future. Despite the rapidly changing guidance, we are committed to safely reopening school as follows:

- NASD will follow recommendations from the state and federal government, as well as the Montgomery County Office of Public Health, to determine when and how it is safe to reopen schools.
- NASD is committed to maximizing student and staff health and safety in accordance with medical recommendations and guidelines.
- NASD is committed to providing rigorous and supportive learning opportunities for all students, regardless of whether we are able to provide in-person or virtual instruction.
- NASD will prepare to the greatest extent possible for various school start scenarios, as well as future school closure scenarios, ranging from all students being in school all day every day, to all students at home participating in distance learning, and many hybrid scenarios of those two.
- NASD will strive to provide options to parents to allow you to make decisions in the best interest of your children's health and education, anticipating a range of responses and needs from the community.
- Reopening plans will be subject to continuous review and revision.

The latest guidance from PDE states that schools may reopen for in-person instruction in the Yellow Phase as soon as July 1, if certain conditions can be met. This is a change from earlier directives that said schools would not be able to reopen until the Green Phase. In order to offer any in-person instruction, we need to develop and submit an extensive Health and Safety Plan, which will need to account for school operations under all three phases of the Pennsylvania's phased reopening framework - Red, Yellow, and Green. This work is currently in progress and is being led by a reopening task force composed of administrators, teachers, support staff, and community stakeholders.

As these plans are still under development and will continually evolve over the next several weeks, we will not be resuming any in-person instruction or programs during the summer. All district facilities remain closed for public use as we plan to use the entire summer to give our staff all necessary time to prepare all district facilities to re-open safely.



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Looking ahead to the planned opening of school on August 31, it appears that we will be in the Green Phase. Our goal remains to safely open schools for in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible. We acknowledge that conditions may change and require a return to remote instruction for certain individuals, buildings, or even the entire District for undetermined periods of time. Therefore, we are partnering with the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit to provide our own cyber school for full-time virtual learning for students who are unable to attend in-person classes for an extended period of time.

Even though we are in the planning stages, we recognize that we will need your help, as parents and guardians, to assist and support several facets of our reopening plans. Here are two specific issues that will require your consideration:

- **Transportation:** Transportation will be a challenge, as the current recommendations are to limit the number of children on buses, as well as enact social distancing measures. We will continue to ask parents/guardians to consider if you will be able to transport your own children to school.
- **Children's Health:** We will also need the support of parents/guardians to ensure that any children who may be exhibiting any symptoms of illness are kept home. We will also need your understanding and cooperation that children who arrive at school displaying symptoms will need to be picked up immediately.

Our Reopening Task Force is working in the following subcommittees to concentrate its work to ensure the health and safety needs of students and staff are met, as well planning for robust teaching and learning:

- Academics
- Operations
- Student and Staff Support
- Communications and Community Relations
- Legal and Logistics

While the Task Force is working, all other district operations will be in full operation this summer. This summer's work will include four meal distribution events, the opening of a family support center at Roosevelt Campus, the completion of the driveway projects at Hancock and Marshall Street, ongoing hiring and recruitment of staff, communication with PDE on updated reopening guidance, partnership with the Montgomery County Office of Public Health on county specific reopening guidance, and regular meetings and communication with Superintendents from other districts to share best practices, brainstorm solutions, and coordinate the best possible reopening of schools.

We will continue to update you throughout the summer as we work through our planning process to answer all of the questions and uncertainties to the greatest extent possible and will



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communicate as decisions are made regarding programming. Please continue to stay safe and stay healthy as you are able to enjoy summer with your family, friends, and loved ones.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Dormer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher T. Dormer
Superintendent of Schools