

Monday, July 27, 2020

Dear Families & Scholars,

We are so excited to invite you back to school for the fall. While there is still some uncertainty regarding the launch of school as the COVID-19 pandemic and government guidelines are ever evolving, we want to assure you that we have been doing extensive planning to ensure we are ready to deliver excellent instruction to your scholar regardless of format: whether it be hybrid, fully virtual, or 100% of scholars back in the building. We also want to thank each of you so much for the feedback you provided in completing the DP Return to School Survey. Your feedback was very beneficial as we continue to think through planning a robust educational plan while carefully considering where we are related to the pandemic.

Here's what we currently know about the start of school:

Our General Model:

- Our preferred approach to the school schedule will be “hybrid” - meaning no more than 50% of scholars will be attending in-person school at once. We are taking this approach because while we know our scholars can learn well remotely, we do believe that our scholars will learn best while in the school building with their teachers. Building strong relationships with teachers, seeing learning styles up close, and delivering the best mode of instruction can all happen most ideally in the virtual format. At the same time, we must do so safely while practicing social distancing, which is why no more than 50% of our scholars will be in the building at any time.
- The default option is a hybrid 50% capacity, A/B schedule.
- If families feel strongly, they will have the opportunity to opt out of in-person instruction and choose virtual instruction instead. However, if parents choose this option, we ask that you be prepared to support your child through the 100% virtual format for an entire trimester before requesting a change to in-person instruction.
- This model is subject to change based on the rapidly-evolving public health situation and based on the guidelines that our state continues to provide.
- Prep Academy and the first week of school will be fully virtual this year.
- At this time, the hybrid 50% capacity instructional format is set to begin on **Monday, September 14, 2020**.

Technology:

In terms of the technology we provide for scholars, here are some of the additional investments we're making to ensure that scholars have the tools they need to fully engage in both onsite and remote learning:

- Starting next year we will be providing scholar-assigned Chromebooks to all DP students. This will both guarantee that all scholars are fully able to participate in remote learning and creates a system that eliminates any sharing of devices across students and staff.
- Systems are being developed to ensure that we can both accurately monitor daily attendance across in-school and remote learning environments as well as maximize scholar engagement with our digital learning platforms.
- DP will continue its commitment to provide assistance to any families that need internet access support. We've purchased high-speed MiFi devices that can be distributed to

scholar families which enable scholars to share video during synchronous learning and engage seamlessly with digital lesson plans.

- We are continuing to explore additional technology investments that will enable our teachers to engage in more effective ways with remote scholars and provide a more consistent learning experience across both in-person and remote classrooms.

Information That will be Available in Coming Weeks from the State:

- Information about busing
- The governor is set to give his decision about the reopening of schools in NY during the week of August 3. If he mandates a particular format/timeline that is different than the above, we will make adjustments in accordance with state guidelines and let you know by the week of August 10.
- The guidelines we will use to determine going back 100% virtual throughout the school year if we have to go back to self quarantine due to an uptick in cases
- Any school calendar changes in light of COVID-19

Safety:

Following the CDC and state guidelines, we will require the following:

- Social distancing - students and staff to stay six feet apart - with decals and reminders on the floor
- Staff and students must wear face coverings; each will be asked to travel to school with a mask daily
- Disposable masks and other PPE will be provided as needed
- As much as possible, students and staff will remain in the same cohort to limit contacts across the school
- Food service will be provided in classrooms; if in cafeteria, we will strictly enforce social distancing
- There will be mandatory temperature checks for staff and students, and anyone with a fever will be isolated and sent home
- Students and staff will fill out questionnaires every day about contacts, symptoms and temperature - privacy will be maintained
- Students and staff who are quarantined or sent home will be required to provide medical certification that they can return to school and are free of any Covid infection
- Hand sanitizer and handwashing stations will be provided
- In addition to daily cleaning, there will be a deep all-day cleaning of our spaces between cohorts of students (likely on Wednesdays)

Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic and evolving local, state and federal guidelines, we may need to revisit the above in order to ensure the safety of all stakeholders and high quality education for your scholars. We will be communicating with you by no later than the week of August 10th about what the final plan is for the launch of the 2020-2021 school year in New York.

You will receive another very short survey from your school in the next week for you to commit to our hybrid model or fully virtual learning within the next week. [Please fill this survey out ASAP](#); it will be integral to our planning for the school year and our ability to best support you, your scholar, and his/her learning.

Rest assured that we are still deeply committed to supporting your children on their path for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

We will also foster joy, community, and parent engagement in both the virtual and in-person format of school for the 2020-2021 school year. While we are living in challenging times, we are so excited to welcome you and your scholar back to another safe, productive, and fulfilling school year.

Thank you, as always, for your partnership,

Natasha Trivers
Chief Executive Officer
ntrivers@democracyprep.org
917-734-2509

Steve Popper
Superintendent
spopper@democracyprep.org
646-457-7748

Emmanuel George
Principal
egeorge@democracyprep.org
917-282-3860