



AUGUSTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

40 Pierce Drive, Suite 3

Augusta, Maine 04330

Phone - 207-626-2468 Fax - 207-626-2444

www.augustaschools.org

James Anastasio, M.A.
Superintendent

Katy Grondin, C.A.S.
Assistant Superintendent

Kathy Casparius,
M.B.A., M.C.T.E.
Business Manager

Susan Walters, CAS
Director of Special Education

Board of Education

Edward Hastings
Board Chair

Staci Fortunato
Ward 1

Christopher Clarke
Ward 2

Vacant
Ward 3

Kati McCormick
Ward 4

Pia Holmes
At Large

Jennifer Dumond
At Large

Kevin Lamoreau
At Large

Amanda Olson
At Large

August 3rd, 2020

Returning To Classroom Instruction Plans

On Friday, July 31st, the Mills Administration released updated guidance to assist school communities in making decisions about how to resume instruction this fall. The entire State of Maine falls in the Green category at this time which allows schools to resume classroom instruction if they can meet the six requirements for opening school safely for students, faculty and staff. The six areas are;

Screening Before Coming to School for Staff and Students

Physical Distancing and School Facilities

Masks/Face Coverings

Hand Hygiene

Personal Protective Equipment

Return to School after Illness

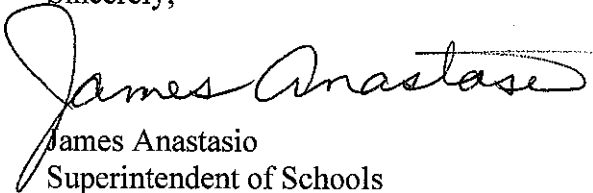
Details regarding each category can be found in the "Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction" on the Department of Education and School Department websites. Four committees have been working to determine if the Augusta School Department can meet the mandatory requirements in those six areas. Please realize that the goal is to reduce the risk. The risk may be eliminated in the future but not the immediate future. The main focus for the committees' work in order of priority was and is; "health and safety for students, faculty and staff", "social and emotional well-being" and "academics". If all of the PPE (personal protective equipment), signage for the hallways, plexiglass, and products necessary to clean and sanitize the building arrive on time, the buildings will be ready and the school department will be able to meet the requirements in the six areas. The most difficult of the six to meet is physical distancing. Teachers must stay six feet away from students and other adults. It is recommended that students stay six feet apart at all times, but three feet is acceptable except during breakfast and lunch. Even utilizing the three foot distance guidance, it is impossible to have all students attend school at the same time. There are still distancing issues to be addressed when three feet is utilized as the standard.

As a result, I am recommending to the School Board that schools open with a hybrid approach that has 50% of students in the schools at any one time with the exception of kindergarten and first grade. We hope to have kindergarten and first grade in class four days a week if we can hire additional faculty and lease the necessary space. As mentioned previously, students will have in class instruction two days a week and have related work two additional days. The fifth day will be for deep cleaning and time for teachers to prepare for instruction and to connect with students and families. A totally virtual component is being developed for students who do not return to in class instruction.

The school department is looking forward to the day when all students and faculty/staff can safely be in school together.

I strongly encourage you to read the Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction mentioned in the first paragraph and the elementary and secondary opening plans. Those documents will provide some insight into the guidelines that must be followed and the great lengths that the school department is taking to reduce the risk and increase the level of safety for all students, faculty and staff.

Sincerely,



James Anastasio
Superintendent of Schools