

AUGUSTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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August 20, 2020

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Dear Students, Parents and Guardians:

I hope this letter finds you safe, healthy, and looking forward to the beginning of school. All members of the ASD Team have been intensely working to prepare the schools for students and staff and to devise an educational plan that follows CDC guidelines and the Department of Education's Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction. Safety and social well-being have been at the forefront of planning and decision making. The educational process cannot be successful if students, parents and staff do not feel the risk level has been lowered to an acceptable level. As a result, school is organized differently and two educational options are available to students.

The first option is a hybrid that involves two days of in person instruction and three days of remote learning. Approximately 50% of the students will be in cohort A which meets Monday and Thursday and the other 50% will be in cohort B which meets Tuesday and Friday. It was necessary to divide students into two groups to meet the required social distancing guidelines. The recommended distance between students is six feet, but three feet is acceptable. With those requirements in place the maximum number of students in most rooms is twelve. Some of the larger rooms can accommodate a few more students. In addition, it is required that teachers and all other adults follow the social distancing guideline of six feet away from each other and from students. Principals will be sending a letters home on Augusta 26th with more details and your child's cohort assignment.

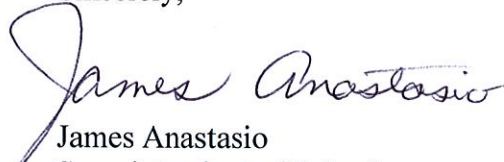
Unfortunately, we are unable to hire the faculty and staff necessary to provide four days of in class instruction to first grade; they will be assigned to a cohort. We are still planning to offer four days of in class instruction (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday) for kindergarten and Pre-K.

The second option is full remote. Elementary students will be working with an assigned teacher who will communicate remote learning expectations. Middle and high school students will follow their course schedule and join classes remotely when they are scheduled to meet. Please make sure your principal knows if you are choosing the remote option.

The attached school year calendar has been revised to reflect the September 8th start date. The first day of class for each grade level is on the right side of the calendar. Early release days have been remove to maximize available time for instruction.

This school year is going to be different than anything any one of us has experienced. The school department has and is continuing to do everything reasonable to protect students and staff while providing the best education possible within the guidelines that must be followed. It is important to remember that the best plans do not meet the needs of everyone and the pandemic could cause the situation to change with little or no notice. The school department will be as flexible and nimble as the situation demands and always use caution when the safety of everyone is at risk.

Sincerely,



James Anastasio
Superintendent of Schools