



July 17, 2020

Thank you for being patient as we have worked out a plan for re-opening schools in the fall. As you have been faced with challenges at home, it has been the same for us during this challenging planning process. We have been holding daily meetings with teachers and staff, looking at ways to welcome and safely accommodate students back into our school buildings.

The Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Department of Health have been releasing guidance on a regular basis throughout the summer. Because of the fact that Vermilion lies in two counties, we have been working with neighboring school districts and health departments in both counties to discuss details of re-opening plans. In the coming weeks, both Erie and Lorain County Health Departments will be providing additional information that will assist us in completing the details of our plan. Teams of teachers, support staff and administrators, have utilized guidance from health experts, as well as feedback gathered from parents. We have created a plan that we believe will put us in the best position to keep our students, staff and community safe through all alert levels.

We realize that this pandemic has forced parents to make difficult decisions that have impacted your family in a variety of ways. In order to minimize the negative impact this may have on your family, our district has spent many hours formulating a plan based on some guiding principles that we believe are of equal importance: 1) Keep student and staff safety as our number one priority; 2) Provide the very best, quality education for all VLSD students; 3) Keep the lines of communication open with parents and all stakeholders, with the realization that plans will need to be reassessed and changes may be necessary; 4) Minimize opportunities for contamination, or spread of COVID -19; 5) Support the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, staff, and families.

With the following guiding framework from the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Health, Erie County Health Department and Lorain County Health Department, Vermilion Schools will:

- Assess symptoms
- Increase sanitation
- Provide physical distancing of 6 feet or more
- Require face masks for all K through 12 students and staff
- Conduct risk assessments and mitigation

Vermilion Local Schools has developed the following options for returning to school:

1. Hybrid Return (reduced capacity) – A reduced capacity model in which students will attend school on a rotating schedule of two days on one week and three days the next week, following a color-coded calendar. This plan will include physical distancing at a minimum of six (6) feet for in and out of class activities. Face coverings will be required on school buses and inside buildings; frequent disinfecting protocols for high contact areas at least every day, with additional cleaning in specific areas as needed; daily symptom assessment must be completed by parents prior to sending children to school. If your child will be attending school, we also need to know if you are able to transport your child(ren) daily. **A survey for parents to provide this information will be sent out after the town hall meeting.**

2 Online remote learning at home – Parents who are not comfortable sending children to school may choose to enroll their children in the 2020-2021 online Digital Academy. Parents who choose this option must notify us by July 31, 2020. **A survey form will be available online for parents to notify us that they are choosing this option.**

Our staff is hopeful that we can return to a normal school schedule sometime during this school year. Our entire community would like nothing more than for the risk level to be mitigated, and we can return children to their classrooms. If that becomes a reality, we will communicate new options to all families, whether attending school, or choosing the online option.

Our administrative team will conduct two (2) virtual town hall meetings on Wednesday, July 22 to provide all of the specific details on the district restart plan. Session 1 begins at 10:00 AM, and Session 2 begins at 6:30 PM. A link to a Zoom meeting will be published on our website and social media pages prior to the meeting. Participants will be given an opportunity to ask questions during the meeting, and we will do our best to address everyone's concerns.

Thank you again for your patience as we have worked through these challenging times.

Respectfully,

Philip M. Pempin
Superintendent