



"A belief in what is possible."

SUBJECT: Schools to Reopen with Hybrid Model | July 22, 2020

Dear Families,

I am writing to provide you with an update on our plans to reopen our school buildings. To start the school year, Franklin West Supervisory Union, along with all 16 school districts covering Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle Counties who are members of the Champlain Valley Superintendents Association (CVSA), will implement a hybrid instruction model that will include both in-person and remote learning. This plan to return to school is student-centered, focused on social-emotional needs, and designed to keep our students learning at a high level. Most importantly, a hybrid model affords the ability to offer in-person learning in the safest environment possible while adhering to the best practices of the [guidance issued by the Vermont Agency of Education \(AOE\)](#). Here's how the hybrid model will work.

- Students will be divided into two groups.
- Groups will attend school in-person two days a week and learn remotely three days a week.
 - Students and staff attending in person will wear masks and practice physical distancing.
 - Groups will be thoughtfully created so they best support families, including grouping family members together whenever possible.
 - We are working on scheduling and will have that information to families as soon as possible.
- Almost all students will be learning remotely on Wednesdays. We will use this day to provide individualized support to students, engage in professional learning and planning for our staff, and deep clean our buildings.

While we all agree that nothing compares to the benefits that students receive from in-person instruction, after extensively reviewing the AOE's guidance and evaluating how to operationally implement those requirements and recommendations in our schools, reviewing survey submissions from our families and staff, and consulting with our reopening committee, we feel the hybrid model will best address the health and safety of our students and staff given the current health data available.

Having fewer students in the building at a time will help reduce contact with others and allow for better distancing. The smaller groups will also allow teachers and staff more time to assess the academic progress and needs of our students. With fewer students in the building, we can better help them adjust to new expectations while fostering healthy routines throughout the day,

such as regular hand washing. In these pandemic conditions, it is also imperative that we continue to improve our remote systems so that we can be ready to adapt if health data requires a shift to full remote learning again.

We are also preparing to offer a remote-only/virtual learning option for families. More information regarding this option will be available soon.

We acknowledge the hardships that hybrid and full remote models may place on families, including our own faculty and staff. Although it will be a challenge, the overwhelming majority of families and staff surveyed preferred opening schools in a hybrid learning environment. By working together, openly communicating, and being creative and flexible, we can overcome these challenges together. That said, please understand there are many moving pieces to these plans, and we will need to adapt as the situation surrounding COVID-19 evolves and we receive further guidance from the AOE and the Department of Health.

Finally, in addition to academic work, I want to assure you that our teams will work tirelessly to support your child's social and emotional needs through this transition. School is going to look and feel different this year, and we know all of our students will need support. We are here for your children and for your family.

Enthusiastically Yours,

Jim Tager, Superintendent
Franklin West Supervisory Union