

July 17, 2020

Dear NSSED Families and Staff,

The eyes of the nation are on school leaders to “restart schooling” this fall. NSSED, along with our member districts, will begin instruction in a matter of weeks. We have engaged in rigorous planning to create safe conditions for learning and to educate students in a creative way.

We collected almost 300 questions from you on our reopening surveys - thank you again for responding. We have read countless reports, information and updates about the coronavirus / COVID-19, and back to school planning guidance.

Status of Reopening Plan

We will release details about what learning will look like in the fall by the end of this month. Here is what we can report today:

- Using our existing Leadership Council approved 2020-2021 school calendar, we anticipate our plan will be a phased-in approach to reach our goal of in-person learning.
- We will likely use remote learning and blended remote learning (combination of in person and remote learning) to reach that goal, relying on guidance from government organizations such as the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and county health departments.
- In early August, administrators will share more specific information about their programs or service areas.

Our Leadership Council has scheduled a special meeting with us to discuss the draft reopening plan and provide their input on Monday, July 20, at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

The planning we will share will be reflective of the questions we have received as well as evidence-based practices in educating students with disabilities. Staff and community health and general welfare are also of the greatest concern in this planning process. We recognize this time calls for plans to change as we learn more information, so join us in remembering that we must be flexible and agile in our planning and implementation.

Regular Communication

We are committed to weekly updates; this message is the second of those messages and is the follow up to yesterday’s Reopening Committee meeting.

Please continue to read our communications and stay informed by visiting our newly added [Reopening web page](#). You will also find links to reopening information available from each of our member districts.

What can I do to prepare?

As a reminder, state guidance provides that face coverings will be the norm at school. We strongly encourage families to have students wear masks at home to become accustomed to them. If you feel that you (staff member) or your child cannot wear a face covering due to medical circumstances, please note that current guidance from the State requires a doctor's note. Please contact your/your child's administrator if this might be the case to begin planning accordingly.

Expect classroom and school environments to look different. Social distancing and enhanced hygiene practices (*e.g.*, hand washing and sanitizer) will be utilized to the best of our ability, though we anticipate that six feet social distancing may not always be possible in every environment. Parents, please discuss the importance of social distancing and enhanced hygiene measures with your child. Staff, the cooperative will provide you with appropriate personal protective equipment.

Finally, to meet state guidance expectations, we will need everyone's cooperation in certifying daily that you/your child do not have COVID-19 related symptoms. Please anticipate additional safety measures that may include random temperature checks during school/workdays. Information on this process is being developed and will be shared at a later time.

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