



Steven Rioux, Superintendent of Schools
45 Westminster Road, Canterbury, CT 06331
Phone (860) 546-6950 Fax (860) 546-6423
srioux@canterburypublicschools.org

August 12, 2021

Dear Canterbury Families,

We hope your family was able to find time to enjoy the summer vacation. It is hard to believe that school will be starting on Wednesday, August 25, 2021.

As we continue to plan for the 2021-22 school year, we should expect that the lingering effects of the pandemic will impact the school setting. While many people are vaccinated and most public places have reverted to pre-COVID behaviors, our students' exposure to COVID-19 still exists. The State Department of Education (SDE) has issued interim guidance that the district will be following, which we will explain further in this communication.

In addition to the SDE guidance there are also mandates we must follow. The Governor's most recent Executive Order (EO) 13A directs the Commissioner of Public Health to set rules regarding mask mandates in schools. The most recent memo from the Department of Public Health is from May 2021, which requires all students and staff to wear masks inside schools. EO 13A is currently in effect until September 30, 2021. Additionally, students will be required to wear masks on school buses. While students and staff are outside, masks are not required. As new information becomes available we will share it with families.

Last year, the district utilized a suite of mitigation strategies to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading the coronavirus in our school setting. In addition to wearing masks, we used desk shields, physical distancing, frequent hand washing, increased frequency of cleaning schedules, cohorting, contact tracing, reduced social interactions, and other classroom level strategies. Utilizing these strategies, Canterbury was fortunate last year to maintain an in-person learning model of all students most of the year. We are determined to continue that trend this year.

The new guidance from the SDE is lessening the need to implement all of the previous mentioned strategies. We will be cohorting students by grade level, which is a change for CES. This will allow students to return to the cafeteria at lunch and provide some flexibility at recess. Students will be able to use their lockers this year, but access will have structured times to reduce crowding in the halls. While students are masked, more opportunities for group work will be allowed. New guidance reduced the definition of a close contact from six feet to three feet in a classroom setting for students while masked. And finally fall sports will start on time at BMS. We will no longer be using desk shields on every student's desks. The use of partitions will be

limited to certain settings. It is our desire to provide students with more opportunities in school, while maintaining appropriate safety measures.

There is a sense of excitement among staff as we prepare to have all of our students returning to school. Remote learning is not an option this year, which allows us to return to a full day of instruction on Wednesdays.

This has been a busy summer in Canterbury. We have hired many new staff and below is an introduction of our new faculty and some faculty in new positions:

At BMS:

Erin Doran - 7th and 8th Grade Language Arts Teacher

Yajair Bautista- Dunshee - Spanish Teacher

At CES:

Jenna Currier - First Grade Teacher

Rachel Videira - Third Grade Teacher

Jennifer Vickers - Third Grade Teacher

Hayley Salisbury - Music Teacher

Jennifer DeFrancesco - Special Education Teacher

Amy Arnio - Paraeducator

Danielle Young - Paraeducator

Monique Revellese - Paraeducator

District-wide:

Polly Dean - K-8 Reading Interventionist

Heidi Aforismo - K-8 Math Interventionist

Kelly Bahre - Instructional Coach

Norma Wickiser - Transportation Supervisor

Please visit our website to look for updates as they become available. On our website we have posted this message, State Department of Education Interim Guidance, the Governor's Executive Order 13A, and the Department of Health Universal Mask Mandate.

CES and BMS will be sending families building level information this week. CES open house is scheduled for August 24. BMS open house is scheduled for August 31. We will also be posting our transportation runs as soon as possible.

We look forward to seeing everyone soon!

In Partnership,

Steve Rioux