



Duneland School Corporation

August 5, 2020

Duneland Families,

Duneland School Corporation (DSC) administration will be submitting a recommendation to the school board on Monday, August 10th to delay the start of the school year to Tuesday, August 25th either in Level 3 or 4. A final Level determination will be made on Tuesday, August 18th. The delay to the school year is being recommended as a result of the recent surge in active COVID-19 cases in several DSC schools affecting students and staff, active COVID-19 cases in the townships served by DSC and the preference to open with an in-person option that meets guidelines outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and Porter County Health Department. The instructional days will be moved to the end of the school calendar in May/June. The DSC school board and administration is reviewing new reopening guidance that is arriving daily from both the state and local health departments. In addition, we will be utilizing the additional time to observe protocols implemented by other districts for in-person learning. This will allow us to make adjustments to in-person options within the DSC Reentry Plan. The DSC school board and administration is committed to pursuing scheduling options that provide both in-person and remote choices for families. Hybrid* scheduling options are being explored as a viable way for schools to not just open, but to have a reasonable chance of staying open due to recently updated ISDH guidelines. As stated in our reentry plan, current students and staff will not be able to maintain recommended social distancing under the in-person model in Levels 2 & 3. A hybrid model would allow students and staff the possibility to effectively social distance within the classroom setting. With that in mind, we all need to prepare for the possibility of being at Level 4 (remote) at any time during the school year.

*Hybrid Model: Some students would be in the building while others would participate in virtual learning. These groupings would spend equal amounts of time learning in the school building and at home in Canvas.

The DSC school board and administration understands and is sympathetic to the scheduling challenges that a delay to the start of the school year (and uncertainty as to the Level in which DSC will open schools) creates for families and staff in planning for child care and work schedules. While several Northwest Indiana districts have made 9-week or semester designations to move to a remote/virtual model for all students, the DSC school board and administration prefers not to make long-term scheduling decisions that could negatively impact the possibility of providing in-person instruction during the twists and turns we have come to expect during the pandemic.

Families are asked to register students for in-person or remote learning by the end of the day on Friday, August 7th. This will allow for staffing assignments and class balancing to occur before students return to school. DSC extra-curricular activities will remain open and/or begin on schedule while following pre-established guidelines. Students enrolled in special education classes (SELF) or career and technical education courses (Porter County Career Center) will receive information from their Teacher of Record and/or instructor and follow the schedule at the specific site (with appropriate transportation provided). We also strongly recommend families report symptomatic conditions, direct contact with infected individuals and/or positive test cases to their school(s) as soon as possible. This data will be vital to creating the safest environment possible for our students and staff. ISDH guidelines require individuals who exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms to isolate at home for ten (10) days and those in direct contact with someone who tests positive to quarantine at home for 14 days.

I realize this message does not provide the clarity many were expecting. We appreciate your continued understanding, patience and support as we make every attempt to provide the best learning environment possible for our students, families and staff.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chip Pettit, Superintendent
DUNELAND SCHOOL CORPORATION