

July 10, 2020

AASD families,

I hope you are having a restful summer! Staff and administrators are working hard to fully prepare for diverse scenarios for this fall.



We know our families are waiting for decisions to be made and we appreciate your patience as we incorporate the feedback from your surveys as well as from our staff. Even as our Safe School Reentry Work Groups are completing their planning process, we understand the need for flexibility as we continue to work with our local health officials to respond to the fluctuating COVID numbers in our region.

Thank you for your trust in us as we continue to stay focused on maintaining high-quality instruction for our students within a safe and welcoming environment for all.

*Stay safe and well,
Judy*

Supply Lists, Onsite Registration, and Meet & Greets

During the month of July we typically share our school supply lists, [meet and greet dates, and onsite registration opportunities](#) so our families can plan and get ready for the upcoming school year.

As we plan for the fall, we will be placing those lists and dates on hold until our Safe School Reentry Plan is released at the end of July. These onsite events will most likely look very different from years past. We hope to share site-specific information in early August. We will still work to provide support, virtual and/or in-person, for all of our returning students, especially our new incoming students and our kindergarten families.

Survey on Return to School in the Fall

We received nearly 7,000 responses regarding individual student needs. Your input, as well as our staff survey input and the expertise of our more than ten Safe School Reentry Workgroups, will be used to develop a scenario-based plan for the start of the school year. Those plans will be reviewed by our City Health Officer per our AASD Pandemic Plan and presented to the Board of Education in late July.

The chart below shows all responses relating to student learning options for the fall. Our survey results also show that the majority (64%) of our families are comfortable or very comfortable with returning to face-to-face instruction with safety guidelines in place. We want that too. We want our students back in our schools as often, and as soon as possible. However, we need to ensure that this is done in a safe manner for all - our staff, our students, and all of our families.

We also need to be flexible and prepared for all scenarios as we look ahead, not just to the fall, but to the entire school year. We may have to transition quickly between scenarios if there are outbreaks in a particular classroom or a particular school that require fully virtual learning for a period of time, as designated by our City Health Officer.

We are happy to see that many families (over 72%) ranked a hybrid option (instruction delivered partially online/virtual, partially in-person) as their second choice. We may need to shift rapidly to a virtual environment, like the hybrid option, and we need to be prepared to do it well.

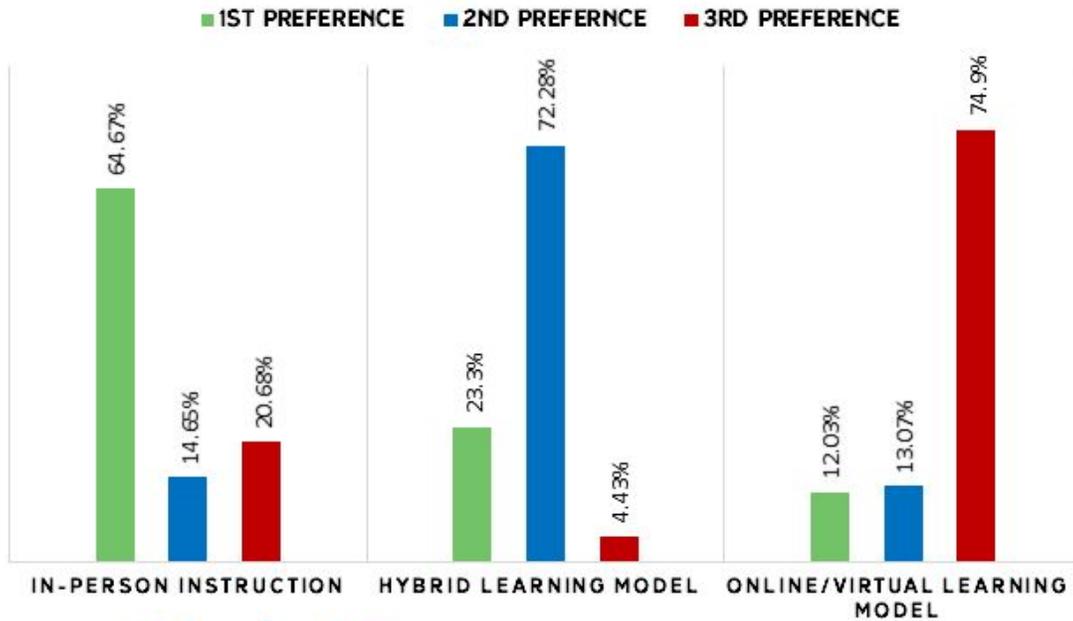
We know that many families do not prefer a fully online/virtual learning model (instruction completely online) for many reasons: childcare concerns, student achievement concerns, and technology barriers. We are confident that we are better prepared to support enhanced fully online/virtual learning than we were in the spring should that be necessary at any point in the future. Sending student packets home will NOT be part of any potential learning plan for the 2020-21 school year.

All grade levels, EC-12, will be utilizing the same learning management system this year. [Canvas](#) allows teachers to facilitate, document, and track learning in an online environment. Parents and guardians can use Canvas to see important class information including assignments, due dates, assignment feedback, and more using their Canvas Observer Account. Canvas parent/guardian accounts will be accessible after the start of the school year.

In order to provide virtual online learning opportunities in an equitable manner, we are also planning to purchase Chromebooks for each student in grades 4 - 6 and touchscreen Chromebooks for EC- grade 3, at least one device per family.

Staff will also be engaged in professional development so that they can use Canvas to connect with students, engage students in their learning, and move students forward in their learning of essential grade level standards. Additionally, staff in grades K-8 will receive training in iReady, which will be used with students in grades K-8.

FAMILY PREFERENCES FOR STUDENT LEARNING IN THE FALL



Online and Virtual Schooling Options

If you are interested in an option that guarantees full-time, at-home virtual learning for the entire 2020-21 school year, you could consider enrolling your child in one of our virtual charter schools. [Wisconsin Connections Academy \(WCA\)](#) educates students in grades 4K - 12. [Appleton eSchool](#) is another AASD virtual charter school providing part-time and full-time options for students in grades 9 - 12.

Follow-up to Graduation Ceremonies

Back in May, we made a decision, based upon the ongoing health emergency, to hold a virtual graduation ceremony on May 28th. At that time, we also asked graduating seniors and families to hold August 3rd as a possible date to host an additional graduation celebration/ceremony for our Class of 2020 seniors.

Based upon some of the most recent regional COVID-19 data, and ongoing conversations with our local and state health officials, we have made the difficult decision to not host an in-person graduation celebration/ceremony on August 3rd.

We strongly believe that bringing together a large group of people at this time is not the right decision, and would place our graduates, families and community at risk. Please note that charter school seniors at VNS and WCA will receive separate communication related to graduation.

However, we do believe that we can appropriately offer an opportunity for 2020 graduates and their families to take graduation pictures on the high school stages at East, North and West during the week of August 3-7.

High school principals will be sending out important information in the near future detailing how graduated seniors and their families may sign up for a time slot to take pictures on the decorated stage at each high school in a controlled environment. In addition, high school principals are still considering other ways to honor the Class of 2020 during the upcoming school year, based upon what the state of our ongoing public health emergency might allow.

While we understand that some graduates and their families were still hoping for an in-person graduation celebration on August 3rd, we hope that you will understand our decision during these unprecedented times. Thanks for your continued support of our students and our staff!

Building Closures

Our school buildings remain closed to the public through July 31. Playgrounds and outdoor equipment at elementary schools are open to the public but are not being sanitized or monitored by the District. High school outdoor stadiums/tracks will continue to be closed to the public until further notice during Phase 1 of the *AASD Return to Play* guidelines. Signage at all AASD outdoor facilities indicate the importance of following recommended safety precautions for social distancing, etc. We encourage our community to follow these guidelines.

Fall Athletics

With the potential for 2020-21 high school fall sports season quickly approaching, we are committed to preparing our student-athletes to safely compete in their chosen sport while ensuring an environment that is as safe as possible in which to do so. Decisions regarding whether or not the fall sports season will proceed this year are still being considered. Per WIAA guidelines, these decisions are to be made locally and in collaboration with health officials based upon the risk factors of the COVID-19 Pandemic for our region at that time.

Because the 2020-21 fall sports season typically gets underway before the 2020-21 school year begins, the High School Activities Directors have created a Return to Play plan. Phase 1 of this plan details how student-athletes may take part in functional training exercises on school grounds as a first step to prepare safely for their chosen fall sport. The guidelines and protocols found in the Return to Play plan have been reviewed by AASD nurses and the City of Appleton Health Officer. [Read more here.](#)

Annual Online Registration

The Appleton Area School District's 2020-2021 required annual registration is now available via the Infinite Campus [Parent Portal](#). This annual process is done to confirm and/or update your student's information.

Be sure to take advantage of getting a jump start on the upcoming school year by completing registration as early as possible for your family. Prompt registration allows us to properly schedule buses, assign teachers, and provide any other services that might be necessary. Early registration allows us to provide the individual and personal attention your child/ren deserve. Families are also asked to logon to the portal later this summer to complete the Meal Benefit application, and pay school fees, if necessary. Additional information will be provided later this summer when the Meal Benefit application and school fees are available for families.

Please note, updating your method of contact preferences is a very important part of the annual registration process. All contact preferences are set back to all methods, and are only changed through the registration process or updating through the portal once the school year has begun.

Safety First

As we adapt to our “new normal”, it can start to feel commonplace. However, it’s not normal and we cannot become complacent in our daily routines and behaviors to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Our collective efforts to continue to follow the guidelines below in our homes, our neighborhoods, our community, our state, and our nation will save lives and speed the process of returning to our school buildings as soon as it is safe to do so.

We encourage you to join with us to continue to follow the recommendations of our local and state health agencies including those below from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services:

- Avoid close contact with others and practice physical distancing.
- Stay at home as much as possible. Cancel events and avoid groups, gatherings, play dates, and nonessential appointments.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people, when possible.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Practice good hand hygiene.
- Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, and mouth when in public.
- If you become sick, stay home.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (for example, tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles).