

## D90 Transition to Full-Remote Instruction (F)

Thu, Aug 6, 2020 at 1:50 PM



River Forest  
Public Schools

Dear District 90 Students, Families, Faculty, and Staff,

After much deliberation and consideration, River Forest District 90 will begin the 2020-21 school year with full-remote instruction for all students. The transition to full-remote learning is in response to mounting concern about the sustained increase of the COVID-19 positivity rate in Cook County, shifting guidance from local, state, and national public health agencies, and lack of specific directives for schools about responding to potential disease transmission. Together, these developments impact the ability of the school district to sustain in-school operations in the safest possible manner.

We understand that this news is unexpected and distressing, particularly because a Board resolution approving a "return to school" plan providing for in-person and hybrid instruction was approved at the Special Board of Education Meeting on July 27. However, the approved "return to school" resolution allows for modifications to the plan when necessary, and Board members have indicated their intent to affirm the transition to full-remote learning at an upcoming Special Board Meeting.

Among other reasons, the overarching *D90 "Return to School" Plan - Fall 2020* (attached) recognizes that a transition to remote learning may be initiated for either of the following:

- The inability of the school district to implement or sustain school operations in a safe and functional manner
- Heightened incidence of pandemic illness occurring in the local community

Earlier this week, the Cook County Department of Public Health released information that indicated in one week's time the COVID-19 positivity rate had increased from 5.2% to 5.8% from July 22 to July 29, with a continuing upward trajectory. Without knowledge as to whether this trend will continue, the return to full-remote learning is being announced to allow families the chance to make necessary arrangements for their students and their particular family situation. We recognize that this change poses several immediate challenges. However, D90 Administrators and Board of Education members believe that the transition to full-remote learning is the most prudent decision given the current circumstances.

With three weeks remaining until students begin school, this change is intended to ensure that District 90 faculty and staff members still have the necessary time to focus on curricula and lesson development to make remote learning robust and challenging. Technology training opportunities, professional development experiences, and Teacher Institute Days are scheduled to provide faculty support between now and the first day of school for students on August 27. Teachers will conduct full-remote learning safely from their school classrooms this fall where they will have open access to their supplies, teaching materials, technology resources, and our robust network infrastructure. Unlike last spring, when state mandates limited our ability to deliver high-quality remote instruction, faculty members will be incorporating many additional elements to remote learning this fall:

- Enhanced student engagement through daily, scheduled synchronous learning, integrated lesson design, increased student choices, and high-interest activities
- Provision of ongoing social-emotional supports
- Increased communication through the streamlined use of learning platforms and the development of clear remote learning expectations for teachers, parents, and students

- Improved consistency and accountability with reinstated grading practices, regular student feedback, and instructional rigor across grade levels

While administrators, faculty, staff members, and families agree that in-school instruction is optimal for educating our students, it is also incumbent on us to ensure that we can accomplish this goal safely and appropriately. Full-remote learning for District 90 students represents the safest and most certain way to deliver high-quality instruction at this time. Between now and October 1, the District will continue to monitor COVID-19 resurgence metrics, await stable guidance from local, state, and national public health agencies, and pursue specific directives for response protocols to potential COVID-19 transmission in schools. On October 1, conditions will be assessed regarding our ability to physically return students and staff to school in a safe manner. Our objective is to accomplish this goal as soon as possible. In the meantime, we will continue to work at improving our models of in-person and hybrid instruction in preparation for the students' return.

Please be assured that additional information, including a D90 Remote Learning Handbook, will be sent to the D90 community on August 15. This supplement will provide detailed information about instructional schedules; responsibilities and expectations of students, families, faculty, and administrators during remote learning; grading practices; delivery of special education and related services; and numerous other matters.

**Additional Details:**

- Please disregard the "Full-Time Remote Learning" form at this time as we will resend an updated form when it is revised." Also, more information about this option will be forthcoming.
- To assist families with childcare matters, District 90 is working with the West Cook YMCA to provide "remote learning supervision" in District 90 schools for an established number of students. Safe, structured supervision will be available for interested students in kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Additional information about registration, location, and other matters will be sent to families by August 15.
- Please view and download the overarching "return to school" plan that includes general information on both full-remote and hybrid instruction by clicking this link: [D90 "Return to School" Plan – Fall 2020](#)

If you have questions about any of the following topics, please contact the individuals below for more information. If you have school level questions, please contact your child's school principal.

Curriculum or Instruction	Dr. Alison Hawley, <a href="mailto:hawleya@district90.org">hawleya@district90.org</a>
Special Education, Related Services, 504 Plans	Ms. Denise Matthews, <a href="mailto:matthewsd@district90.org">matthewsd@district90.org</a>
Instructional Technology	Mr. Kevin Martin, <a href="mailto:martink@district90.org">martink@district90.org</a>

During this uncertain time, your ongoing support is greatly appreciated. Please know that we remain deeply committed to our focus on high-quality teaching and learning, and understand that our students and families are counting on us.

Respectfully,

Ed Condon, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

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