



Re-Opening East Hartford Public Schools

Over the last two weeks East Hartford Public Schools has offered Town Hall Meetings to discuss the re-opening our district. Participants from across the district including staff, students, and families participated in these guided forums. The large number of participants allowed us to see a cross-section of solutions and concerns around re-opening. Participants were asked to respond to the following prompts:

- What are the greatest challenges and concerns for you as we prepare to return in August?
- What suggestions do you have for EHPS in terms of returning in August?
- How can EHPS best support you personally for an effective return in August?
- What recommendations do you have regarding the development and communication of the plan for a return in August?

Challenges & Concerns

Administrators	Teachers & Staff	Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety— How can we ensure the safety of students & staff? • Social Distancing— How will we enforce it? Will there be guidelines? • Protocols— Is the district building standardized protocols around cleaning, distancing, masks, sick children, etc.? • Supporting Teachers— How will we meet the professional, emotional, and physical needs of our staff? • Transportation— What will the impact be on busses, budgets, and supervision? • School to School Transition — What is the best way to support those students? • Student Engagement — How do we improve our efforts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Distancing — How will we enforce it? Will there be guidelines? • Supporting Students— Will there be a SEL plan in place for addressing the emotional and physical needs of our students & families? • Students with Health Issues — Will there be distance learning alternatives for our medically fragile and high risk students? • Special Education Services— How will we meet the mask, distancing, and sanitizing requirements? How will we meet IEPs with fidelity in an online or blended format? • Teacher Expectations — Will teachers be asked to instruct students both in-person and virtually? How do we balance synchronous instruction with the needs of our own children? • Connections with Students — How do I build relationships with students online that I have not met in person? • Sterilization of Materials (manipulatives, lab equipment) — Will there be time and supplies to sanitize classroom materials to meet CDC guidelines? • Technology — What is the plan to get to 1-1 for all students? How will we train students and families? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety — How will the district screen students? How can the district ensure my child is safe? • Social Distancing— Will you have specific classroom layouts that better support social distancing? Will students be in the crowded hallways? • Students with Health Issues—Will my child be expected to attend school? Are there options for distance learning for my child if they cannot attend school? Will the attendance policy be adjusted to encourage sick children to stay home? • Special Education Services— How will my child's IEP be met online? How can my student be supported by teachers if they are required to socially distance? • Transportation— Will the busses be safe? • Connections with Staff—Will my child get regular face time with teachers online? • Children Wearing Masks —How will you enforce this? What will the protocols be for children who cannot wear a mask? • Work Schedules—How will the hybrid or at-home learning model work if I am a working parent? What if I have children in multiple schools?

Suggestions For Solutions

Administrators	Teachers & Staff	Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying a Model — If online, establish a set schedule; distribute teacher workload evenly; consider half in school, half in home for instruction. Supporting Teachers with Students— There will need to be a solid plan in place for PD around SEL and trauma so that teachers can support students and their families. Sterilization of Materials (manipulatives, lab equipment) — Build in time and supplies to sanitize each classroom and the materials regularly to meet CDC guidelines. Planning that is Informed and Strategic— Examine models and strategies that have been successful before we make a decision on a model. Building Models for Working Families — Bring back elementary students full time, with distance learning flexibilities for secondary level. Maximizing Building Resources — Continue and grow the partnership with the facilities staff to keep buildings clean and safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting CDC Guidelines — Provide an online option for some students or staff who are not comfortable or have medical conditions that prevent them from returning. Building Relationships with Students— Consider a hybrid model that allows for some in-person and some online instruction so teachers and students can build a relationship; allow teachers to transition with students for a period of time. Building Relationships with Families— Reinvent Open House; provide support for parents on Google Classroom. Improving DLP Experience —Develop a specific meeting schedule for classes; utilize ONE technology platform; consider a flexible schedule for students to meet with teachers that includes evenings. Supporting Families—Get parents set up on PowerSchool and Google Classroom, making sure they know how to use it. Messaging with Clarity & Consistency — Package messaging around return to school as “if you want to participate, you have to be safe and follow the guidelines.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying a Model— Consider implementing an A day, B day model Ensuring Equity in Technology — Ensure that all students have 1-1 devices; use consistent platforms. Building Relationships w/ Students — Reopen the district 1 week later; use the first week to allow for the development of the student-teacher relationship. Improving Instruction — Work with teachers to build more engaging learning experiences across grade levels. Scheduling classes—Have more live online instruction and scheduled meetings with teachers. Streamlining Communication Tools — Use the same platform & schedule time for phone calls or meetings with parents. Email students AND parents the same communication. Providing Tech for Every Student — 1-1 devices would allow for more communication with and less work for the parents. Scheduling Work Consistently — Give assignments more like we do when we are in school, rather than assign on Monday with a due date on Sunday. Including Parents in the Solutions — Seek out some feedback on the existing plan from families. Use parents and community members as resources. Supporting Families —Provide more live support to parents (e.g. building level support groups).

Next Steps

It is our intention to continue keeping the lines of communication open with all of our stakeholders. Reopening East Hartford Public Schools will take the efforts of our entire community in order to be successful. We honor your concerns and value your recommendations. We will continue to update you as we receive more information. Thank you for your willingness to partner with us and your patience as we build this plan.