



NEW HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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August 13, 2020

Dear New Hartford Families and Staff:

I would like to welcome you to the 2020-2021 school year. I want to thank you for your continued partnership over the last several months. The last several months have challenged our school community in significant ways. I am proud of how our school community has worked together to face these unprecedented challenges. We will be stronger as a result of these shared experiences. The start of the school year will look different from previous years. The New Hartford Public Schools have worked diligently over the last several months to ensure the safety of our students and staff during this global pandemic. Many traditional procedures and protocols have been modified to meet new safety requirements. Many of these new protocols can be found in our District's Reopening Plan that can be accessed on our website. While the current environment is extremely fluid, we have developed plans that allow for flexibility to change our delivery of instruction very quickly. We will always make decisions based on the best interest of students and staff and recommendations from our local health experts and the Connecticut State Department of Education. We will communicate any changes to our schedule in a timely manner. We will continue with our mission to provide creative and meaningful learning opportunities for every student. Our District Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plans are focused on continuous improvement.

There have been changes made to our 2020-2021 school calendar. The start of the school year will be on **August 31, 2020. Dismissal will be at 12:00 pm on August 31, September 1 and 2.** We made these changes to our school calendar so we can allow for a smooth transition to the start of the school year. We have planned for increased Professional Development training for our staff before school starts. This training will focus on new safety protocols, social emotional learning and academic enrichment. The New Hartford Public Schools will begin the school year in a **full In-Person learning model** and allow for Distance Learning for students who will not return in the fall. The Distance Learning Plan is attached to this letter. I want to underscore the point that Distance Learning will never replicate a traditional school day. The bond between teachers and students is unparalleled and the social interaction between children is unmatched.

We understand that students have anxiety and concerns returning to school. We will be working with students to meet their social and emotional needs. We have hired a new district Social Worker to help facilitate this process. Our new Social Worker will work with our staff to ensure a safe return to our schools. I am also pleased to inform you the district will continue to focus on teaching and learning by expanding learning opportunities for every student. The District will be implementing a new math program for the new school year. The new Illustrative Math Program will be focused on state math standards in a more streamlined manner. We are excited to build upon our new 6th grade Advanced Manufacturing Program. We have partnered with Goodwin University to offer this model learning opportunity. We have enhanced several of our initiatives that were implemented over the last few years. We will be delivering the Teachers' College Reading Workshop model throughout the district for the third year. Numerous students have provided positive feedback regarding these new learning opportunities. We will also deliver a new Social/Emotional approach (RULER) for students. This

approach will help students understand the importance of being reflective in their decision making. All of these initiatives are centered on improving teaching and learning in the district.

There have been many upgrades to the schools over the summer. The schools have never looked better. The custodians did a fabulous job in preparing for the upcoming school year. Each school received new student desks and chairs. The security system at each school was upgraded. We have installed new Panic Buttons in each classroom in the district. We replaced several classroom doors with enhanced security features. We continue to invest in our technology infrastructure by expanding our 1:1 electronic device initiative to the entire district. Each student will receive a Chromebook at the beginning of the school year that will enhance their learning opportunities. We also purchased several new Promethean Boards for the primary schools.

We are truly dedicated to providing the best education for your child. Your support is instrumental to the success of our school district. We would like to thank you for your continued involvement in your child's education. We are committed to working collaboratively with you to ensure your child's success. We will continue with Friday Folders each week to update you on activities that each school will sponsor. Please refer to our website for updates to our curriculum. Our staff members will continue to use platforms such as Twitter to update you on school wide events.

The New Hartford Public Schools and I are truly excited about providing the best education for your child. We will get through these trying times together. We look forward to seeing the students on August 31. I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer.

Sincerely,

Brian Murphy
Superintendent of Schools

Enclosures