



OLD COLONY

REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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July 21, 2020

Dear Old Colony Community,

The impact of these uncertain times has been significant for all of our community members. We thank you for your continued support and agility as we continued to respond to a fluid situation. The state has been updating guidance for our return to school on a consistent basis since June 25, 2020. Each guidance update has resulted in increased clarity relative to expectations and parameters we must meet to support our students, whether in-person, remotely, or in a hybrid model of the aforementioned two.

Our desire to balance the social-emotional well-being of our community, with the physical health of our community is an ongoing challenge. The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and families continues to be our primary focus as we carefully plan how to re-open school for the 2020-21 school year in September. Our administrative team and teachers, along with stakeholders, have worked collaboratively over the past few months analyzing different scenarios while listening to the latest guidance from state officials and experts from the fields of medicine and education.

Old Colony is working diligently to develop a safe and effective Fall Reopening Plan that incorporates three possible models: a full in-school model, a full remote learning model, and a combination, or hybrid, of in-school learning and remote learning. We are certain, given the nature of guidance from our Commissioner and Governor, that our return to school will either be in hybrid form (preference with appropriate precautions in place), or remote if mandated at a later time.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has asked local districts to wait until August 10 to finalize reopening plans. We will submit a preliminary reopening plan to DESE on July 31. We anticipate sharing Old Colony's final reopening plan with all students, families, and staff on August 10. However, we feel it is important to share some general aspects of the plan with you now.

General Safety and Health Protections:

- Face masks will be required from the time the student gets on the bus and all the time while at school. "Mask breaks" will be provided for students and staff in accordance with guidelines.
- Furniture and spaces have been re-organized so students and teachers will be within the recommended physical distancing requirements.
- Additional cleaning and sanitizing services have been put in place. We will be doing deep cleaning on a daily basis. This includes our school buses.

- Airflow of our ventilation system has been run with dampers open at a 10% capacity in the past. Dampers will be open to 100% capacity should a return be permitted in the fall.
- Students will be scheduled in cohorts to minimize intermingling of large groups. This will result in students remaining in their classroom areas for a majority of the school day. We have expanded the areas where lunch will be eaten to allow for appropriate distancing.
- Old Colony has established a separate holding area to care for and isolate anyone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
- Any student or staff member exhibiting symptoms, or who may have been exposed to a person who tested positive for COVID-19, will be asked to quarantine at home per current medical guidelines.

Overview of the Models:

Full In-Person Occupancy: While we want to bring everyone back into the building in the fall, the likelihood of this happening at Old Colony is low. We are fortunate to have a well-maintained building with relatively new ventilation and air handling equipment that can be controlled and monitored. However, our building is not large enough to accommodate a full return to school given the guidelines shared by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Regardless, we are assessing the accommodations that would be needed, and the associated costs. These costs include additional buses to transport students, as capacities are reduced on each bus, adapting other spaces on campus to hold classes, adding modular classrooms, and adding additional staff to teach and support students in these other spaces.

Full Remote Learning: Old Colony has purchased several enhancements to our IT infrastructure and learning systems that will provide greater support for a more structured and robust on-line learning experience. We have invested in an online learning platform, to assist our Academic Instructors with a curriculum that will allow for differentiated instruction based on student need. We have also purchased an online platform called SimpleK12 to provide our staff with voluntary and structured opportunities for ongoing professional development.

Hybrid Model: The hybrid model is the model we will look to introduce in the fall. Old Colony provides career and technical education (CTE). This is best done in a shop or lab with a professional CTE instructor present. Based on current guidelines and the design capacity of our school, we will plan for a 50% student capacity. A hybrid model would mean half the students are in the building one week (or two – cycle length to be determined) to engage in hands-on learning, while the remaining students are home participating in a structured remote learning program. Grades 9 and 11 will be in one two-week cycle to participate in hands-on learning in their CTE area or Exploratory, while grades 10 and 12 are participating in remote learning at home. We are working through many details of the model and will be releasing our DRAFT plan as instructed by the Commissioner of Education.

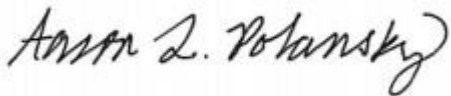
Please note that in addition to the three models outline above, we have given significant thought to providing extra supports for our high needs students. We have established a plan to provide face-to-face support for our high needs students and will be reaching out to provide additional information for families as these plans are solidified in the weeks to come. We will also be working to establish a special orientation period for our incoming freshmen to ensure a foundation of care, nurture, and connection is established prior to instruction and curriculum being delivered.

Old Colony has taken a comprehensive approach to evaluating the needs of our population through the establishment of a Fall Reopening Task Force. Members of this task force include members of the Old Colony staff, School Committee members, industry partners, community partners, service providers, parents and guardians, medical professionals, and students.

We understand the uncertainty you may be feeling as we continue to navigate this fluid situation. I am proud of the work being done by this cohesive group of individuals, and would venture to say that our school community will rise to the occasion as we work tirelessly to meet the needs of our students and families throughout the course of the pandemic.

We will be reaching out to families over the coming weeks to provide additional details and more information regarding technology, transportation, and schedules. We thank you for your continued partnership, and remain available in the event you have further questions or concerns.

With great appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron L. Polansky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

Aaron L. Polansky, Superintendent-Director