

## **Bishop Weekly Update – 9/11/2020**

**Dear Bishop Families,**

**Thank you for your patience as we continue to navigate the uncertainties of this year’s school reopening. You stepped up in extraordinary ways this past spring to fill the gaps caused by our sudden school building closures and we know that the decision to open in a hybrid model will continue to place a burden on your family. Our commitment to partner with you this year is unlike any other. We have heard repeatedly that “we are all in this together” but nowhere is that truer than in educating our students. We have spent the summer preparing for all three scenarios this fall: remote, hybrid, and in person. Our highest priority is to keep our students, teachers, and staff safe and although Massachusetts has some of the lowest transmission rates at this time, we have chosen hybrid learning as the model that we feel is best for the Arlington Public School District elementary students at this time.**

### **Fall Hybrid Schedule Update**

**As you may have heard, we presented a proposal to the School Committee last night that asked for an adjustment to our students’ in person days in the hybrid model. Our proposal was approved, and students will be dismissed from school daily at 1:45 pm. We acknowledge how difficult this news may be to hear this close to the start of school. It has been our mission throughout to have students return to school for as much time as possible this September, but our staffing is currently not at the level it needs to be in order to cover all of the duties necessary. The end of the day will be for teachers to prepare lessons and to plan. Students who are considered high needs (4 days per week) will stay until 2:30 pm. To be clear, this will not change the amount of structured learning time scheduled in a student’s day. Also, lunch will continue to be served at school.**

**The Remote Academy hours and the remote hours of the students who are home in the hybrid program will not change; these school days end at 2:30pm each day except Wednesday, which is an early release. We will revisit this schedule in early November and make any necessary changes based on where buildings are with staffing.**

### **Class Assignments and Cohorts**

**By now, you should have received an introduction from your child’s teacher, and information about your cohort schedule. Next week, we will begin sharing information with families on how to help prepare your child for in-person hybrid and remote learning, as well as more details on attendance, arrival, dismissal, schedules, and other routines that will ensure a smooth return to school, both in person and remotely.**

**We have tremendous empathy for the perspectives and opinions of our families on placement. However, we cannot accommodate any requests for changes at this**

time. Instead, we encourage you to work with your child to support a positive mindset on returning in person or joining a group of new remote friends. This is all really complex, and we need this support.

Although we will be starting our school year in a hybrid model with a remote academy, our goal remains to bring students back to in-person learning as soon as possible. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, working with our state's top medical professionals, have put comprehensive safety guidelines in place to greatly reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Our school leaders and staff have worked diligently to ensure that we are fully prepared to execute all of the recommended safety measures, including: signs to direct staff and students, mandatory mask-wearing, physical distancing, hand washing and mask breaks, additional sanitizing of the school, notification of positive cases, and the ability to transition back to remote learning should it be necessary.

In the meantime, our teachers have received training on safety protocols and guidance for in-person learning, and will continue to use pre-service days next week to continue finalizing our plans. We are confident that they can provide engaging instruction when students are in the classroom, while implementing the safety measures we need to keep students, teachers, and families safe.

Teachers have also received training on remote learning. They are ready to teach our students using a combination of best practices that will include live, whole class instruction, teacher-led small group work, asynchronous and teacher guided learning, and independent work. We're also excited to introduce many new digital tools to engage our students!

We are committed to frequent communications to our families to ensure that we are transparent in our decision making and are providing families with information as soon as it becomes available. It is important that we hear your perspective regarding your child's learning needs as well as his or her social emotional development in order to put a plan in place for your child's continued growth. Given the heightened importance of communications over the next several months, we would ask that you reach out to your child's teacher as a first line for support in answering questions about this new approach to teaching and learning; the whole team is prepared and committed to making this work.

#### **BISHOP FAMILY INFORMATION SESSION -**

I have scheduled a Bishop Family Information Session via ZOOM for next Wednesday, September 16th at 7:00pm. [Meeting Invite Link](#)

Joining me will be Eva Liner, Bishop Assistant Principal and the newly appointed Remote Academy Administrator, and Katie Martin, Bishop School Nurse

Items on the agenda will include:

- Hybrid and Remote Academy models and details
- Building Based Protocols to include Arrival/Dismissal
- Health and Safety

We look forward to seeing you Wednesday!

My Best,  
Mark