

Superintendent Asks Parents for Feedback on eLearning to Help Shape Plans for New School Year

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With one school year over and a second, also with an ongoing pandemic to deal with, Darien schools Superintendent Alan Addley is asking parents for feedback on eLearning, saying it will help with plans for the upcoming school year.

That year may have school buildings open in some way, possibly closed or possibly some combination of the two, maybe at the same time, maybe at different times. School district officials just don't know, and the decision likely won't be their's anyway — Addley said the state is likely to issue a mandate to school districts this summer.

But whatever the future holds, district officials are trying to prepare for it with plans, even if they're only contingency plans. Addley briefly described the planning process, both in an email to parents last week and at an earlier Board of Education meeting.

The school district has a 50-member "Reopening Schools Task Force" that had already met twice as of Friday via Zoom. The committee recommended surveying parents and teachers to get feedback on their experiences with eLearning, and a link to the survey form had been sent to parents before Addley's letter

went out to them on Friday.

"All families should have received a survey link yesterday morning related to your eLearning experience. We ask that you complete the survey by Wednesday, June 17. The feedback you provide will help the DRS shape recommendations for a successful reopening."

Addley's Message, Full Text

(Editor's note: While Superintendent Addley and Darien High School Principal Ellen Dunn have responded to Darienite.com's Freedom of Information Act demand for prompt delivery of all emails sent to all parents of students in individual schools or the district, none of the district's other principals have complied, putting them all in violation of the state FOIA law.)

Darienite.com received this message in an email at 5:41 p.m., Friday:

Dear Parents:

Good afternoon. Congratulations to our students and families on a very successful and creative close to a most unprecedented school year. As many of you celebrate the graduation of our wonderful seniors and the advancement of students to the next grade level, the district extends its sincere gratitude for your partnership these past few months. While there was certainly learning for all of us along the way, we accomplished so much together by working toward the common goal of doing what is best for all our students.

In addition to a week full of celebrations from car parades to the awarding of diplomas, our district's Reopening Schools Task Force (DRS) was hard at work looking ahead to the fall. The DRS convened last Thursday via Zoom. While the group of 50 focused on the important lessons learned during this period of eLearning, they also recommended surveying our staff and parents. All families should have received a survey link yesterday morning related to your eLearning experience. We ask that you complete the survey by Wednesday, June 17. The feedback you provide will help the DRS shape recommendations for a successful reopening.

This afternoon marked the second meeting of the DRS. Task force members primarily met in smaller working groups focused on developing recommendations for *Communication, Teaching and Learning, Special Education, Operations, and Health and Wellness*. In addition to discussing a variety of resources available to support reopening efforts, groups also discussed potential barriers and offered solutions to support plans for a safe reopening.

A significant challenge we face moving forward is the shifting guidance from The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). As we work to develop plans for reopening, it is essential for us to know the mandates and guidelines we must follow for the health and safety of our students, staff, and families. To support this effort, the district maintains close communication with the Commissioner, state professional organizations and our local officials. At this time, we do not anticipate a public announcement of any

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guidelines for a few weeks.

The DRS Task Force will continue to meet weekly during the month of June to plan for the district's reopening in the fall. Our future meetings will focus on a close examination of survey results and drafted recommendations for reopening schools. You can expect the next update from the district on the progress of the Task Force on June 26.

In the meantime, we wish your family good health, rest, and quality time with those you care about most. We hope you are able to make some special memories this summer — socially distanced of course!

Congratulations and farewell to the special Class of 2020!

Sincerely,

Alan

Dr. Alan Addley

Superintendent of Schools