



# Dartmouth Public Schools

*Office of the Superintendent*

8 Bush Street

Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02748

Telephone: 508-997-3391

Fax: 508-991-4184

Website: [www.dartmouth.school](http://www.dartmouth.school)

Bonny L. Gifford,  
Ed.D. Superintendent

Michelle T. Roy, C.A.G.S.  
Assistant Superintendent

James A. Kiely, M.B.A.  
Assistant Superintendent of  
Finance and Operations

Dear Dartmouth School Community:

I'm writing to provide you with another update regarding plans for the start of school. As was required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the district submitted its Comprehensive Return to School Plan to DESE on August 14<sup>th</sup>. [You may view the plan by clicking on this link.](#)

Teachers are scheduled to participate in professional development from August 31st through September 14th. These ten days will be spent in professional development sessions such as Safety Precautions, Optimizing Your Google Classroom and Impacts of Trauma on Learning. Teachers will also be collaborating on curriculum in grade level and department meetings, conducting kindergarten screenings and developing individual learning plans for special education students.

School begins for all students on September 15th. In accordance with our "Phased In Remote to Hybrid" plan that was approved by the school committee on August 10<sup>th</sup>, high needs populations will attend in person. This includes special education PK students whose IEP plans require they participate in our integrated PK program and special education students enrolled in one of the district's PASS, PALS or PATHS programs. All other students, except PK peer partners, will participate in remote learning. When the district transitions to a hybrid model PK peer partners will be able to attend our integrated program on an every other day schedule according to an assigned cohort.

Our remote learning model has been developed to be more robust than it was in the spring. Our plan requires faculty and staff to report to their buildings on a daily basis. This will enable teachers to access their materials and technology devices, collaborate with colleagues in small groups, receive technology support and teach in an environment free from distractions. Students will be required to participate in their regular schedule via Google Classroom and Google Meet. Attendance will be taken and assignments will be graded. Students can expect to receive additional guidance from their schools shortly.

PK screening is being scheduled for August 24-27. This is for peer partners who have been accepted into our PK program and students on our waiting list. Parents will be contacted to schedule an appointment. We are also planning on conducting kindergarten screenings during the first week in September. Once exact dates are identified the schools will contact parents to schedule appointments.

In anticipation of transitioning to a hybrid model of education we sent out a request asking parents to let us know if they plan on sending their child to school or will opt to enroll their child in the district's virtual platform. Information gleaned from our survey request will support our efforts to schedule students into cohorts and to plan for transportation. Although we asked for results by August 14<sup>th</sup> folks may wait until after the August 18<sup>th</sup> school committee meeting to hear more about the plans we have for a virtual platform.

The district is analyzing two virtual learning models for families that select to stay home during hybrid learning. We are vetting the platforms to determine which one will best work for students depending on their level i.e. elementary, middle or high. In either model, students will be able to enroll in grade level courses. Depending on the model, courses may be self-directed or offered through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods. Students choosing the virtual platform will be supervised by a Dartmouth staff member. We will let parents know exact details regarding options as soon as a decision has been made. Once the district begins hybrid learning parents will be able to make a definite choice between sending their child to school and enrolling in the virtual model. Students enrolled in a virtual model will only be allowed to rejoin the district's hybrid model at a semester break.

The School Committee and administration continue to collectively bargain with the union the terms and conditions of our Comprehensive Return to School Plan and more urgently our Remote Learning Model. We hope to conclude those negotiations soon.

As we transition to a hybrid model, we will continue to monitor building and staffing capacity, and the metric tool recently released by the Governor. We all recognize this is a very fluid situation; we must all be prepared to transition as new information becomes available.

We continue to thank you for your patience and understanding.

Bonny L. Gifford, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools