

Dear Culver Families,

We hope you and your families are all safe and healthy.

We know that you are eager to learn the plans for the 2020-2021 school year so you can plan and prepare your children.

Current Plans For the Start of School

All students will begin the year with our Enhanced Remote Learning Program (see description below). Full-time remote learning will continue for all students through September 25, 2020. As the Covid situation allows, students will begin a gradual transition to a hybrid learning environment with some in-person instruction on Monday, September 28th.

In making this decision, the primary focus is on the safety of students and staff. In addition, the District is guided by:

- A student-centered approach that addresses students' health, academic and social-emotional needs.
- Developing a plan that focuses District resources towards the most supportive launch to the year.
- The knowledge that no matter what plan the District implements, it is not possible for any school to return to a pre-March 13th "normal" for the foreseeable future.

We are making other preparations for the eventual phase-in to in-person learning. We hope that students will have an opportunity to meet in-person with their teachers during the week of September 21st. We do not yet know yet what the daily schedule might look like for students. The administration will work closely with all stakeholders to provide for the gradual and safe return to in-person instruction.

Enhanced Remote Learning Plan

Our current focus is on the preparation of an exceptional Enhanced Remote Learning program to deliver focused instruction to all students. The Instructional Design Team has been meeting and reviewing parent and staff feedback so that our program aligns school resources to the needs of students and families.

Our enhanced learning program includes live daily instruction with teachers in all core subjects --- reading, writing, and math. These lessons will be recorded so that parents can review the information with their children at a time that best fits the family schedule. At the middle school level (grades 6-8), daily instruction will follow a modified block schedule with live class sessions four days a week.

In addition, our enhanced remote learning program includes learning “kits” so that students have books at the proper reading and interest levels, as well as materials in other subjects that engage students.

Some of the other key elements of our Enhanced Remote Learning program include:

- Consistent use of both synchronous (online education that happens in real time, using platforms like Google Meets, etc.) and asynchronous (pre-recorded) learning experiences will be scheduled each week to provide guided instruction and videos to support independent practice.
- Use of frequent, formative assessments and meaningful feedback. Grading practices aligned with the remote learning environment, not limited to pass/incomplete. We should extend grace and flexibility with due dates so families are not unnecessarily stressed about deadlines.
- Regularly scheduled synchronous support sessions - for parents - led by a grade level teacher to preview upcoming content and provide strategies for helping them support their child’s learning at home. Regular progress reports to students and parents.

Remote Learning Schedule

The school day hours are still 8:00-3:00. Finalized grade level remote learning schedules will be shared with families next week. Here’s some general information about the K-5 and 6-8 remote learning schedules.

K-5th Grade: Instructional schedules on Monday through Thursday will consist of 2.5 hrs of live (synchronous) instruction between 8:30 am and 11:30 am. In addition, every student will receive one daily 20-30 minute small group live instructional session in the areas of reading and mathematics. Instruction on Friday will be asynchronous (learning that happens on your schedule) in nature.

6th - 8th Grade: Students in the middle school will receive live (synchronous) instruction starting at 8:45 and concluding at 2:00 pm Monday through Thursday. The schedule will be broken into two days (A day: Monday and Wednesday, B day: Tuesday and Thursday) with three 75- minute core instructional blocks each day. In addition, students will participate in advisory, PE and a Specials class at the end of each day, twice a week. Instruction on Friday will be asynchronous (learning that happens on your schedule) in nature.

Band/Orchestra/Enrichment/Intervention Programs

Band, orchestra, enrichment, and intervention programs are on hold for the beginning of the school year. After the first few weeks of enhanced remote learning, programs may continue again. We will keep families updated.

Preschool Program

The Culver Preschool Program will be offered remotely this year, at least initially, to students who were accepted into either the AM or PM class. Remote preschool consists of activities that will be shared with parents electronically, either through email or by logging on to our website, for parents to do with their child. Live group video sessions will take place once per week for all students and small group sessions will be held with students who are qualified for special education services or are considered high-risk during the hours of 9AM and 3PM.

First Week of School

Families will pick up iPads or Chromebooks and learning kits on Wednesday, August 26th. Learning kits are bags of materials to make remote learning more engaging and not completely computer-dependent. Learning kits will be distributed about every three weeks. We will share the August 26th pick up logistics closer to the date. On the first day students will also receive training on technology use.

The first day of enhanced remote learning is Thursday, August 27th. This day, students will spend time with their teachers, engaging in video conferencing, discussing their

weekly schedule, and learning about remote expectations. We will share schedule information soon.

Several teachers are joining grade level teachers to bolster math, reading, and writing. Other classes are taking place, such as specials, PE, social studies and science, but with less frequency as more time will be devoted to math, reading and writing. Therefore, you will notice different teachers sharing the responsibilities of math and reading groups, providing live instruction, and teaching core subject areas. For example, your child's grade level will likely have a specials or PE teacher sharing the grade level instruction. We are happy for this support to bolster grade level remote learning.

School supply lists are posted on our [district website](#). Teachers will be encouraging students to use the supplies during enhanced remote learning. Thank you for supplying your children with these items for school.

Curriculum Night

We will host a remote Curriculum Night on Thursday, September 10th, from 6:30-8:00. Please mark your calendars; we look forward to this event.

PTA

Our PTA will be at Culver to welcome you to the new school year during tech pick up on Wednesday, August 26th. If you are interested in becoming a PTA member, you can sign up online. The PTA has generously offered to place Culver yard signs in all our families' yards, a perfect way to show Culver pride. Please see the *attachment* for more information.

Technology Expectations

Our enhanced remote learning plan includes video conferencing with teachers. There are ways to make conferencing more successful and engaging for all students. Please see our [video conferencing expectations](#) for families.

Alternate Instruction Day

Each Friday, we will have an alternate instruction day. Students will be able to catch up with work or attend missed small group teacher time. This is an opportunity for students to also seek extra help, if needed.

Grading

A traditional grading system will be used in the fall. Students are encouraged to turn in all work on time and reach out to the teacher with any questions or needs.

Feedback is part of the educational process. It is a challenge to give those fun smiley faces/stickers on assignments, via computer. But, formative feedback can and should be part of small group and individual student meetings. In addition, teachers will be providing written feedback on assignments.

Class Lists

We will share class lists (students/homeroom teachers) one week prior to school starting.

Online Registration for All Families

Registration for the 2020-2021 school year is online this year. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to complete registration for both new and returning families. You can click on “make a one-time payment” for registration fees. New families and returning families with incoming kindergarteners will be contacted by Ms. Kim Gordon, the Principal’s Secretary, to complete additional requirements.

Once you have completed the online registration form, you are able to pay the student registration fees.

Registration Fees

All families of students in K-8 are required to pay annual registration fees. Registration fees are \$100 per student and no more than \$300 per family. In order to pay your registration fees online at the discounted rate, please [CLICK HERE](#).

Preschool parents do not pay registration fees.

If you have any questions, please contact the main office at 847-966-9280.

Families Moving Out of District

If your family is moving or has moved out of the District, we are in the office to provide you with the necessary transfer out paperwork. Please contact Ms. Gordon to learn the steps in the transfer out process so your child's records can be shared with the new school.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Ms. Gordon at kgordon@niles71.org or at 847-966-9280.

Health Education Resources

As our State transitions to Phase 4, our children will need your support in developing new habits including wearing a face covering when out in public and continuing to physically distance ourselves when we are outside of our immediate families. Your assistance in building these habits now will help support your child in transitioning to in-person instruction at school. The following resources may be useful to you as you work to build these habits with your child provided by

[Healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org).

[Masks for Children](#)

[Getting Outside During Social Distancing](#)

School Office Reopened

The school office reopened to our regular summer schedule on Tuesday, July 7, 2020. Office hours are Monday-Thursday from: 8:00-4:00. We are closed each day from 12:00- 1:00. Please call the school with any questions and to set up an in-person appointment, if necessary. We are following all CDC and IDPH guidelines. In anticipation of school starting, we are practicing our safety protocols. All visitors over the age of two must wear a mask and maintain proper physical distancing. As a visitor, we will check your temperature as you enter the office and ask if you have any COVID symptoms. If your temperature is above 100.4 or you have symptoms, you will be asked to return when you are symptom free for at least four days.

Summer School Meals

Culver will continue to distribute weekly meal bags, each Wednesday, from 12:30-1:30. We serve meal bags from the door near Ms. Lurie's classroom, in the west lot, closest to the baseball field.

Meals are not limited to students receiving free and reduced lunches, and there is no income verification process. The weekly bags are quite heavy, as they contain lots of food.

2019-20 Yearbooks

The virus has caused a delay in our 2019-20 school yearbooks. They won't likely arrive until September. When the yearbooks arrive, we will inform parents. Thank you for your patience.

Appreciation & Final Thoughts

If you or your family are experiencing any hardships or are in need of assistance, please be sure to email Dr. Smolinski at esmolinski@niles71.org. Our staff is available to help.

The pandemic is a fluid situation, resulting in uncertainty which makes it difficult for families to plan for the next school year and has required us all to be patiently persistent. We appreciate your continued support, as we all work toward the ultimate goal of returning all of our students to in-person instruction as soon as safely possible.