

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.

Staff Updates

We are excited to welcome three new staff members to the Culver family and one familiar face. Beata Soltys has transitioned from teaching assistant to first grade teacher. Amanda Mistretta is joining us as a special education teacher. She will be working primarily with middle school students. Allie Mennella has moved from first to third grade, and Alan Hirsch will teach a section of fourth grade. Dr. D'Anniballe is currently filling-in as a long-term substitute teacher in first grade.

First Week of School

Wednesday, you received learning materials in bags. *Please* save these bags and bring them to Culver when you pick up the next bag. The next distribution of instructional kits will occur during the week of September 21st.

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.

Student Attendance

We will take student attendance each day, in Power School. In order to take attendance, students will complete a daily attendance task. It will be a warm up, such as a math problem, a journal prompt, a drawing, or an activity.

Remote Learning Schedule

[Click here to access the Remote Learning Grade Level Schedules that were shared on 8/20/2020.](#) Students can now access PowerSchool to view their homeroom teacher assignments, as well as class schedules for students in middle school.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Covid-19 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](#)

Weekly School Meals

Culver will continue to distribute weekly meal bags, each Friday, 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.

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile will be at Culver Monday, September 28th. Please see the *attachment* for details.

Principal's Bookshelf

Each week, Dr. Smolinski will highlight and recommend a book for our community. Then, she raffles it to a family. Please email esmolinski@niles71.org if you would like to enter the raffle.

This week's book is [*Bedtime for Sweet Creatures*](#) by Nikki Grimes and illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon. Dr. Smolinski recently read this during Principal Good Night Storytime. This is a visually stunning, very sweet bedtime book about a sleepy toddler and her family - and all the adventure that occurs before saying goodnight. This is a picture book, mostly geared toward PreK-2nd grade sleepers.

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.