Dear District 90 Families, Faculty, and Staff,

I hope that you are well and your family is healthy.

The purpose of this message is to update families about our planned approach to “return to school” in August. This message is intended to provide general information, since we are still early in the planning process and not yet able to address all of the questions families may have at this time. Please be assured that subsequent communications will provide much greater levels of detail about important topics such as student scheduling, safety procedures and protocols, and changes we will make to ensure the robustness of remote learning moving forward. Please note that the D90 “return to school” approach described in this communication remains contingent on the state remaining in Phase 4 of the Governor’s Restore Illinois plan and that no additional directives by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), or Cook County Health Department are issued.

The questions that are the top concern for families and staff are when and how we will return to school. **D90 students will return for the first day of school on Thursday, August 27, 2020.** Lincoln and Willard Schools will open for full in-person instruction for all students in a full-day format. Roosevelt will begin school this fall in a blended remote learning format, with students attending school in-person and participating in remote instruction on alternate days. Middle school in-person instruction will be provided in a full-day format, and alternating remote learning days will provide a minimum of five hours of instruction and learning experiences. Remote learning experiences will include live lessons at established times on a daily basis. At all schools, there will be adjustments to the school day structure, significant additional safety procedures for students and staff, and modifications to classroom layouts to accommodate required 6-foot social distancing. Furthermore, student grading will be reinstated at all schools this fall with certain adjustments. Here are the highlights of some essential changes for District 90 schools:

**Lincoln and Willard Elementary Schools**
- Students will remain in a classroom cohort for the entire school day, except for recess and other outdoor programming, such as physical education. All “specials” classes will also be held in the assigned classroom.
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms with their student cohort.
- Inclusive preschool and kindergarten will be in attendance daily, with intensive cleaning and disinfection of learning spaces between the morning and afternoon classes.
- In order to minimize classroom density and to meet social distancing requirements, students will be seated at least 6 feet from teachers and other students.
- Non-essential furniture will be removed from classrooms to maximize distancing, and additional class sections will be added as necessary to address classroom density limitations.

**Roosevelt Middle School**
- For the blended remote learning format, students will be divided into Group A and Group B attendance groupings. With over 800 students and staff members enrolled or assigned to work in the school each day, groupings are necessary to reduce the overall density of the building.
Most students will attend school in-person and remotely on an alternate day basis. Students with identified service needs (special education, Section 504, English Learners) will attend school in-person on a daily basis.

Students will continue to change classes, but the final daily schedule is still in development.

Students will eat lunch in supervised small group settings.

Lesson delivery will be scheduled at pre-designated times to facilitate concurrent remote and in-person instruction, interspersed with offline periods for independent practice, group work, or assignment/lesson completion.

For all District 90 schools, the following will also be implemented:

- Masks and wellness certifications/screenings will be required daily for all students and staff.
- Six-foot social distancing requirements will be in place throughout all school buildings.
- Teachers are currently working to modify their curriculum for the fall to ensure that any significant identified learning gaps from the spring will be addressed in the coming year. Plans also include assessments of current student proficiency to identify individuals who may be in need of focused interventions.

While the District has made progress in determining when and how schools will reopen, numerous matters are still under consideration, investigation and/or refinement. Among others, these include:

- Uniform student and staff safety protocols
- Staggered arrival and dismissal times to manage entrance/egress procedures
- PPE and formalized cleaning/disinfecting regimens
- Specific response plans in case of student or staff COVID-19 diagnosis
- Social-emotional supports for students, staff, and families
- Determinations about extra-curricular and athletic activities
- Viability of parental determination for a full-remote program for their child
- Viability of optional “remote learning supervision” for students in grades 5 and 6 on remote learning days

All of the components of the “return to school” approach have been guided by priorities for safety, equity, social-emotional and physical wellness, and high-quality instruction. In addition, the approach has been informed by directives and input from the ISBE; IDPH; District 90 attorneys; remote learning and “return to school” survey feedback from students, families, and staff; River Forest Education Association (RFEA) leadership; Board of Education members; stakeholder action teams and workgroups (consisting of staff, parents, administrators, and students); school planning work by Districts 97 and 200; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance; and other factors. The insights and best practices from all of these sources have steered our “return to school” approach, and we remain heavily indebted.

Please be assured that we will continue to provide timely updates and information over the coming weeks. I invite you to attend the Board of Education meeting on July 20 via Zoom for expanded details on this plan. Also, we will release a comprehensive D90 Return to School Plan during the first week of August that will address additional questions about matters that have not yet been resolved.

Please allow me to thank our faculty and staff, RFEA leadership, Board members, building custodians and engineers, and District administrators for all of their commitment and hard work this summer on behalf of our students and families. I am also grateful to D90 families for their patience and understanding as we strive to work through our “return to school” planning process in a methodical manner. Together, we will weather this situation with aplomb and model for the children in our midst how a dedicated and resourceful community can surmount almost any challenge with a growth mindset and a problem-solving perspective.

Respectfully,

Ed Condon, Ph.D.
Superintendent