

***Floral Park-Bellerose School District***

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**KATHLEEN SOTTILE, Ed.D.**

*Superintendent of Schools*

September 2, 2020

Good Afternoon Floral Park-Bellerose School District Community Families:

As I write this letter, it is hard to believe that after what seems like an endless stretch of time, in just one week we will have students returning to our buildings for the 2020-2021 school year. Our teachers and staff, whether remote or in person, have been in school preparing their lessons and classrooms. We feel that although this will be a different start to the year, it will be enriching and creative. We are excited, confident and ready to provide your children with a world-class education whether in person or remote. Thank you for your support, patience and trust.

If your child is eligible for transportation, he or she has been placed on their previous year's route and transportation is available whenever you require. As per our previous procedure, letters have only been sent to the parents of kindergarten students (being routed for the first-time); grade 3 parents at Floral Park-Bellerose School (a later pick-up time); and any other students that are new to the District, or who have moved. These letters were included in the Principal's welcome back packet. If you have any transportation questions or would like to verify information, please email our Supervisor of Transportation, Tyrone Kelsie at [tkelsie@fpbsd.org](mailto:tkelsie@fpbsd.org).

We have reduced the daily ridership by dividing grades 3 thru 6 into two separate cohorts. In addition, as per our District Survey, approximately 85% of those that are eligible for transportation have indicated that they would be responsible for providing their own transportation. This will further reduce the number of students on a bus, and we would like to express our sincere gratitude for your contribution to this effort. The final piece of the transportation safety plan is that all children are required to wear a mask on the bus, unless medical documentation is provided.

As we have mentioned in our previous communications, students (and all staff) attending in person are required to have their temperature taken prior to entering the school or school bus. As per the latest guidance, any students or staff members with a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above, or any COVID-19 symptoms, must not come into school. A letter was mailed yesterday to all of our families with the directions for accessing our new Frontline Health Services Portal. Please download this app on either your phone or your device, complete daily, and remember to take your child's temperature each morning prior to school.

In the very near future, we will make our announcement regarding our pre-kindergarten program. Our pre-k teachers are planning, and we will be articulating with them a re-opening plan. Please remember that information changes rapidly so therefore we are planning for a variety of models.

As you are also aware, we will not begin the school year with our School Life Plus program. As soon as we are able to offer this program or any form of essential childcare, we will reach out to everyone providing a detailed reopening plan and start date.

As a reminder, students must wear a mask while on school grounds, in school and on the school bus. Students may wear their own mask; however, neck gaiters, bandanas, and masks with vents or valves are not allowed to be used in school. We will also have plenty of extra masks on hand in the event our students or staff need one.

The last several months have been challenging for our students. We have always made social emotional learning a part of our practice and will continue to highlight this daily. In addition to our regular practice, our teachers have been trained to utilize the Lions Quest program and will incorporate various learning lessons and activities from this program into our curriculum.

As some of you may have heard during our Q & A sessions, we will be exchanging our current iPads for an updated version; therefore, we are asking all families that have a school device to please return them with your children on the first day of school. They will be exchanged for an updated/new iPad. All remote families will be receiving information early next week about instructions on how to pick up their books and iPads.

Every student in grades kindergarten thru sixth grade has or will be issued an iPad. Parents should stress to their children the need to treat these devices with care. We understand that accidents with these devices can happen and therefore the District will maintain a replacement inventory. The District will cover the cost of most repairs; however, costs associated with purposeful or repeated damage, loss, or undocumented theft will be borne by the parent or guardian.

Teachers will take breakfast and lunch orders first thing in the morning for all students. A food service worker will collect the order forms and distribute breakfast at the same time. They will have carts with pre-made "Grab and Go" breakfast items. For lunch, food service workers will visit each classroom with insulated bags labeled with each classroom's lunch. The lunch order form will be in the bag so that the teacher will know what each student has ordered. We will charge the lunch account after the food has been delivered. About 15-20 minutes after delivering the meals, lunch monitors will come back around to pick up the insulated bags and lunch forms for the next day. The insulated bags will be specific to each classroom and sanitized after each meal. There will be a separate bag for allergy deliveries. There will also be paper placemats for all students to put on their desk. We are strongly urging parents to prepay for their meals via myschoolbucks or by sending in a check/cash to the main office to put on their account.

We have worked extremely hard over the last few months preparing a safe and robust re-entry plan. We ask for your patience and understanding now more than ever before as we begin this new journey together. Our entire staff cares deeply for your children and their families and as I have said many times before, together we can accomplish anything and "We've Got This!"

Enjoy your last few days of summer and please stay safe. On behalf of the Board of Education and myself, welcome to the 2020-2021 school year!

Yours truly,

Dr. Kathleen Sottile