

ROCKETSHIP

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

Families,

Last week, Governor Lee extended the State of Emergency until August 29th and Mayor Cooper announced Nashville is returning to Phase 2 of the city's reopening plan. These decisions have been made because our community is experiencing a steep increase in the number of COVID-19 cases. This is a very big turn of events and a clear signal that caution for all families, students, and staff is needed as we live out the rest of our summer.

Last month, the city released a Framework for a Safe Return to School created jointly by local health and education officials. This framework stated that school buildings should not reopen while the city remains in Phase 2. However, other parts of the city's reopening plans have been modified and we are waiting to receive updated guidance from health and education officials. While we wait, we know these three things right now:

1. The health and safety of our families remains our top priority and the communities we serve have been experiencing more cases of COVID-19 than other parts of the city.
2. On our recent transportation and technology survey, 70% of families indicated a preference for Distance Learning at the start of the school year.
3. It's time to make a final decision about how we will start the school year so that our staff can focus on making it successful and so our families have time to prepare.

For these reasons, **we will open our school year with Distance Learning, then re-assess on September 1st.** Please know that we have a strong distance learning platform ready for you that includes daily social / emotional learning, live instruction and flexible time periods that will allow us to provide each student with the learning opportunities and activities that meet their individual needs.

In order to engage in Distance Learning for our first few weeks, we have a timeline that makes it possible to receive your chromebooks and all information necessary for a successful start to the school year.

Week of July 6th: During this week, we are collecting all Rocketship issued Chromebooks. We need these Chromebooks to do updates so that all new apps are available for your Rocketeer. If your student was assigned a Chromebook for Distance Learning this past spring, you can drop the device off at campus any day this week (July 6th-10th) between 10 AM and 2 PM. Evening drop-offs from 4:30-6:30 PM are also an option on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (July

8th-10th). You should plan to pull through the student dropoff lane and remain in your car. A staff member will come collect the Chromebook from you. Please remember to wear a mask during your interaction with our staff, as masks are now required in Davidson County.

Week of July 13th: Virtual Orientations and Teacher Check-Ins. School Leaders are hosting online orientation events.

- **Rocketship United Academy** will hold an online orientation for families new to Rocketship on Wednesday, July 15th from 4:30-6:30 PM and for returning families on Thursday, July 16th from 4:30-6:30 PM.
- **Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary** will hold an online orientation for families new to Rocketship on Thursday, July 16th from 5-6 PM and for returning families on Friday, July 17th from 5-6 PM.

July 18th: Both campuses will be doing a Distribution Day from 8 AM - 5 PM. At Distribution Day, we will be distributing the Chromebooks and other necessary materials. While we will be practicing physical distancing, we plan to make this event a celebration. We want this to be a fun experience that gets our Rocketeers excited for the start of the school year.

Week of July 20th: Teachers will be conducting virtual home visits and answering any questions you have about Distance Learning and Rocketship. We value relationships above all else. While we won't be in your house, we 100% believe that we can strengthen our relationships via computer and phone. Teachers will contact you individually to schedule a time for your virtual home visit.

Week of July 27th: Distance Learning Academy will take place virtually for all families and caregivers who will be supporting our Rocketeers through their Distance Learning experience this fall. Teachers will contact you to schedule a time during this week to meet with them and a small group of other families in the same grade level to walk through our Distance Learning schedule and online platforms and answer any questions you have. We encourage students, their parents and any other caregivers to participate in the Distance Learning Academy so everyone knows what to expect when school starts back.

August 3rd: Launch Distance Learning! For the first 2 weeks we want to encourage, recognize and incentivize building student habits for Distance Learning. We know the majority of our students engage in technology use several times a week. We know they can do this. Our aim is to make Distance Learning as engaging as a computer game!

While we are fully prepared for a return to school through Distance Learning, this was not the scenario we were hoping to be in at this point in time. We miss seeing all of you in person and having our students on campus. We have a Principal whose daughter will be starting her Kindergarten year at Rocketship and we all envisioned a different start for her and all students. That said, safety is our biggest priority.

Even if schools are able to return to in-person learning later this fall, we anticipate that there will be intermittent school closings throughout the year. We are confident that we are better prepared than other elementary schools for this challenge. **Our commitment to help every child reach their full potential is stronger than ever. We will work with each of you to ensure your child is successful through Distance Learning. We are in this together!**

With love and gratitude,

James Robinson
Director of Schools