

Dear Parents:

Tomorrow is the first day for students to return to in-person or blended/ remote instruction under the return to school plan. I want to reassure each of you that the Board of Education and Administration take seriously its obligation to provide your children a quality education, and at the same time provide your children and our staff a safe learning environment.

We understand individuals have different opinions on reopening school. Mt. Zion School District's return to school plan was developed in accordance the guidelines established by the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Department of Public Health. With limitations, our plan allows parents to make the final decision on whether or not their child will receive full remote instruction or receive a combination of in-person and remote instruction. Moreover, we worked with the Macon County Health Department in developing our plan. Additionally, we partnered with the teachers' union to address teachers' concerns and issues with returning to work, which resulted in the parties' signing a Memorandum of Understanding. We continue to meet with the teachers' union to collaboratively address issues to effectively implement our instructional model, and parents should be prepared for some changes as this unpredictable year unfolds.

The Macon County Health Department has recently notified all Macon County School Superintendents of a significant increase in positive COVID cases in the County, including a growing number of children diagnosed with COVID. The Macon County Health Department confirmed remote instruction poses the least risk of contracting/spreading COVID, but school districts are permitted to reopen and provide in-person instruction to students, and this plan was also approved by the school board. Additionally, Governor Pritzker recently announced that Illinois schools that adhere to ISBE/IDPH reopening guidelines are safe to reopen with in-person student instruction. We will continue to work closely with the Macon County Health Department as we make informed decisions to ensure students/staff are provided a safe learning environment. In the event a District student or employee tests positive, parents effected by the situation will be notified, but we will maintain the confidentiality of the individual that tested positive.

Mt. Zion School District continuously monitors this ever fluid situation and is prepared to make quick adjustments as necessary to ensure students and staff are safe. We appreciate your continued support during these challenging times. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions concerning our return to school plan.