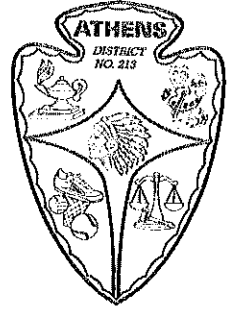


# ATHENS COMMUNITY UNIT DISTRICT NO. 213

Scott M. Laird  
Superintendent

#1 Warrior Way  
Athens, Illinois 62613  
217/636-8761 FAX: 636-8851



July 15, 2020

Dear Athens Families,

As we all continue to confront the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, one thing remains constant: the importance of education for our students. Our plans for the coming academic year will follow guidelines from the Illinois State Board of Education. While we intend to offer traditional in-person instruction at the start of the year, we learned through our parent survey that 45% of families in the district are "unsure" if they would allow their child to return to school. In response to this, we will also be offering a remote learning option in addition to in-person learning. Our planning teams are continuing to develop instructional plans and strategies to enrich and improve upon the remote learning experience from last Spring. Once the instructional plans are in place, the District will communicate the formal plan. Prior to the first day of school on August 24<sup>th</sup>, we will ask families to choose in-person or remote learning instruction. If the positivity rate increases in our area during the school year, families will have the option to move from in-person to remote learning at any point. Likewise, the remote learning option will be available for any student who falls ill or who may be forced to quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19 either from school or from an external source. To be clear, remote learning will be available and ready for all students in the event of a District-wide closure due to a surge in local or state-wide cases.

Protecting the health and safety of students and district employees is a priority. The Illinois State Board of Education currently requires individuals in a school building to wear a face covering and practice social distancing. As recommended by the Illinois State Board of Education, the District will adopt policies and possible exceptions as part of its in-person learning plan. In addition, the District will consider opportunities for instruction and breaks outdoors while social distancing, weather permitting, to provide students a relief from use of a face covering. It is recommended that students who ride a school bus also wear a face covering and allow as much space as possible between individuals. Parents who can transport their student are encouraged to do so. The use of face coverings, frequent hand washing, and social distancing will hopefully prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 and keep our students in school throughout the Fall.

The Illinois State Board of Education also requires daily self-certification of student health symptoms. Daily, the District will require each family, choosing in-person instruction, to self-certify their student is symptom free. Information on daily self-certification is forthcoming. In addition, the District will provide information on its policies for when a student must self-quarantine and procedures for students who show symptoms during the school day.

Guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education on COVID-19 is continually changing and new information is often released daily. As such, we again ask for your patience and understanding as we continue to develop a strategic plan that offers your student a safe enriched learning environment both in-person and remotely.

Some important upcoming dates include in-person registration on August 6<sup>th</sup> at each building from 4pm to 7pm. Also, Pre-K screenings will be conducted on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> by appointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Laird".

Scott Laird, Superintendent