

# Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools

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*Our schools are caring, creative, and equitable communities that empower all children to build on their talents and passions to grow into engaged citizens and life-long learners.*

July 23, 2020

Dear MRPS Families,

On July 15th, we received word from the Agency of Education (AOE) stating virtual schooling was permissible under Vermont education law. Since that time, the administrative team has been working to understand what our capacity is in regards to a virtual learning option--particularly in relation to our students who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 as well as students who live with someone who is at high risk. We have also been working with our staff to understand who falls in this high risk category. There are many things to consider as we work to mitigate risk as much as possible.

After careful consideration, MRPS has decided to create a Virtual Academy for our kindergarten-eighth grade students and offer an alternative virtual path at MHS for any student who wants this option. This does not negate the planning we have done around our K-8 POD models for in person learning. Parents can choose a virtual or in person path for the 2020-2021 school year through the survey linked to this letter.

## [SURVEY DIRECTIONS](#)

We, admittedly, are still ironing out many details. In order to reach more clarity, we need to hear from you about every student in our District. If you have more than one student, please fill out one [survey](#) per student. In order to plan staffing, we need the surveys completed by August 3rd. If you are waiting to hear what the MHS in person schedule will look like, this will be sent out on July 31st. **Should we not hear from you, we will assume your child will be attending school in person.**

## [VIRTUAL ACADEMY INFORMATION](#)

MRPS is essentially creating another K-8 school. Mike Berry, Director of Curriculum and Technology, will serve as the principal of our K-8 Virtual Academy. Once we know which students will be taking this option, we will be able to staff accordingly. Please note that should you commit to this option for your child, you are also choosing to place your child with a different teacher. The staff for our Virtual Academy will have extensive training on how to run an online classroom and be our District leaders should we need to return to a completely virtual format like last spring.

More detailed information regarding the Virtual Academy can be found [here](#). Briefly, our K-8 Virtual Academy entails:

- a “regular” school day, but done in a virtual format;
- both asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities;
- multiage virtual classrooms;
- parent partnerships with both the learner and teacher;
- access to any extracurricular activity at MRPS;

- access to the MRPS school lunch program through a parent pick up option.

As this planning is still in the very early stages, we have not ironed out all the details. The information in this survey is essential to our planning.

MHS will be working with partners in the state and beyond to provide virtual options for our students. Again--we need to know numbers before providing more details.

To summarize...MRPS is offering two different learning formats for the 2020-2021 school year. Parents can choose between a virtual or in person school experience. *Your answers on [this survey](#) will commit your child to one or the other.* Surveys are due August 3rd. Should you choose the in person option now and your family situation significantly changes over the course of the year (eg. a family member in the same house as the student is diagnosed with cancer), we will change the child's placement. Because of staffing limitations and significant safety protocols that are being built around the known number of people in our buildings, we will not be allowing students to change between placements except in extreme situations.

I recognize that this letter will most likely result in more questions. Know that there is probably not one question that you are asking that we are not also asking and attempting to answer. Your notes of support and your patience are very much appreciated as we figure out this gigantic puzzle.

Give your kid a hug from all of us at MRPS and wear that mask!

Sincerely,

Libby Bonesteel  
Superintendent of Schools