



# Bells ISD

*Learn Work Serve Respect*

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July 18, 2020

Dear Bells ISD Family,

We have waited most of the summer for firm guidance from state officials that would help our leadership team create a back to school plan based on sound decisions that are best for the students and staff of Bells ISD. We will be releasing our plans on Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>. In the guidance document that will be published next week, families will find answers to many questions they have regarding the new school year. Please understand; this situation is fluid, and changes may occur even after we have released our guidance.

As of now, Bells ISD still plans to open campuses for the 2020-2021 school year on August 13<sup>th</sup>. One modification that families need to be aware of is that we are choosing to do a hybrid (A/B) start through August 21<sup>st</sup>. We have made this decision to reduce the number of students on campus for those days to help our students and staff adjust to the safety protocols and social distancing measures we will have in place. Campus administrators will communicate with families regarding the specifics for the first week and a half of school very soon. We know the first day of school is a BIG day for everyone, especially our younger kiddos and seniors. I assure you; we will plan things in a way that still allow those special moments for our students.

Our *Back to School Plan* outlines the options for learning in Bells ISD this school year. Students will have the option to learn at school, face-to-face, or at home through virtual/asynchronous learning. Students and parents choosing virtual learning must be aware that requirements will be significantly more demanding than the at home learning model this past spring, but if that is the option you choose, we respect your decision and will support your child through all aspects of his or her learning. One important detail to note as you are making this decision is that Bells ISD will require face-to-face instruction for students to participate in extracurricular activities. More information can be found in the guidance document next week.

Many have asked if we will be requiring masks for students and staff. If we are still under the Governor's Executive Order when school starts, face coverings will be required in grades 4-12. We are working on other safety measures for our younger grades. The guidance document will provide more details, so you will be able to reference that by July 22<sup>nd</sup>. I can assure you that we are doing everything possible to keep students, teachers, staff, and our community safe from this disease, while taking into consideration the necessity for getting back to our classrooms so students can learn. We know that not everyone will be happy with or agree with 100% of the safety measures we are planning, but we do believe we are providing the best possible solutions for our district and community.

Someone will be reaching out to your family the week of July 20<sup>th</sup> to gather information on your plans for returning to school. Regardless of your plans for face to face or virtual learning, we do need you to complete online registration for the 2020-2021 school year. You may access the Parent Portal for registration on our website at [www.bellsisd.net](http://www.bellsisd.net).

As we continue preparations for the 2020-2021 school year, please know that our number one priority is the health and safety of our students and staff. While these are unprecedented times for public education, TOGETHER we can make this year a safe and successful year for our students. We must stand UNITED as we face the challenges ahead. Thank you for partnering with us in your child's education.

Sincerely,

*Tricia Meek*, Superintendent of Schools