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SCHOOL DISTRICT

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July 30, 2020

Dear Valley Park Community:

I hope this message finds you well and safe. I am writing to inform you that on Wednesday, July 29th the Board of Education approved a recommendation to start the 2020-21 school year using 100% distance learning as proposed in Phase 3 of the [Re-entry Framework](#) until the end of the 1st quarter (October 23, 2020).

I know that this will come as difficult news for many families and students, and particularly for parents and guardians of younger children, as distance learning places them in a very challenging predicament. I assure you that this decision was made after much thought, dialogue, deliberation, and reflection. For the last several months our leadership team has been working intensely to resolve a list of complicated challenges that would make it possible to reopen our schools in August, and our teachers have been planning for a host of scenarios. This has been an earnest and unrelenting effort. We are deeply motivated by the knowledge that on-campus learning is the preference of the majority of our school families and it is also the preference of educators in our district. We miss your students and want to educate them in-person when conditions are safer.

As a community, we must take seriously the alarming rise in COVID-19 in our region. As the science of COVID-19 continues to evolve, so does our understanding of the impact young people have in contracting and affecting community transmission rates. We have a responsibility to realize that our school district is not an island and we must prioritize the safety of our students and staff. Further, with the significant restrictions on when students and staff can attend school or work based on symptoms of COVID-19, the county's inability to contact trace at a reasonable rate, and the fact that many testing centers are taking 7-12 days on average to return test results, our ability to provide continuity of education or to even remain open in Phase 1 or Phase 2 of our re-entry plan is further complicated. The time has come to direct our energies toward a strengthened distance learning program that will best serve our students and give our families the most time to plan for this change.

I will provide additional updates and details on the structure, breadth and depth of our 100% distance learning model in the days and weeks ahead. You can expect additional information on distribution of devices, back-to-school virtual parent and student meetings, technology training, and other topics of interest to support and sustain student educational success over the coming months. We are committed to our students, families and staff, and it is our goal to maximize learning no matter the mode we are in or the challenges we may face. We plan to do our very best at being responsive to the needs and concerns of our community.

Here are some key pieces of information we can provide to you at this time:

(636) 923-3500 | [WWW.VP.K12.MO.US](http://WWW.VP.K12.MO.US)  
1 MAIN STREET | VALLEY PARK, MO 63088



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- Families are still asked to commit to in-person instruction or one of the virtual pathways (K-5 or 6-12) described in our framework by August 5th. **More information is listed below.**
- Valley Park School District will begin the 2020-2021 school year in Phase 3 of in-person instruction which is 100% distance learning.
- Our schools will stay in distance learning (Phase 3) until the end of the 1st quarter (October 23rd).
- Distance Learning will look and feel much different from the program provided last Spring, with increased expectations for students, staff, and families. (More information coming soon).
- Distance Learning will combine structured daily and weekly schedules for students, required virtual attendance, daily live/video instruction, engaging remote learning content, assignments that are graded and reviewed by teachers, and consistent communication with families.
- We will continue to monitor conditions in our county, reassess, and announce our capacity and timeline for the next steps to transition to on-campus teaching – if it is possible to do so in early October.
- We continue to be committed to providing accessible meal service and devices for families during this time and are working with available agencies and resources to meet the needs of our families. We will be communicating our plans in the weeks ahead.
- We will continue to post updates on our website at <https://www.vp.k12.mo.us>, through the Infinite Campus messaging system (text and emails), using our social media platforms, and through principals who will share updates with school communities as schedules are finalized.

I recognize that there are varied feelings, opinions and beliefs during this tumultuous time and that not everyone will agree with every decision we make. However, please know that we are acting in a way that prioritizes the health and safety of our students, staff, and families, and that allows us to provide the best continuity of high-quality instruction until it is safer to return to our classrooms and buildings.

It is imperative as a community that we continue to embrace creativity, strength, and kindness through this process. This Spring we demonstrated remarkable resilience and together we will continue to persevere and work in the best interest of our students given the unknown climate we are navigating.

I am grateful for the patience and understanding of the entire Valley Park community as we confront this pandemic together.

*Dr. Tim Dilg*  
Superintendent



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Learning Pathway Decision August 5th

As the academic model selection deadline approaches on **August 5th**, we know that some of our families have questions about the difference between starting school in Phase 3 of in-person instruction which is 100% distance learning and the K-5 and 6-12 virtual learning pathways described in our Re-Entry Framework. Here are some notes about that:

- We are still asking families to select EITHER the in-person learning pathway or one of the two virtual learning pathways by August 5th and commit for the first semester.
- As of today, our hope is to return to Phase 2 or Phase 1 of in-person instruction at the start of the 2nd quarter, provided conditions improve in our county and region.
  - Any student who selects in-person instruction will be expected to return to school when it reopens.
- Students who select the virtual K-5 or 6-12 virtual learning pathway by August 5th will be expected to remain in virtual learning regardless if students and staff return to in-person learning later this fall. The commitment is for the entire 1st semester.
- K-5 virtual pathway students will start the school year being taught by Valley Park educators and working with their Valley Park grade level classmates.
  - If school returns to in-person instruction later this Fall, the K-5 virtual pathway students would continue their instruction 100% virtually while their peers would return to some phase (1 or 2) of in-person learning.
  - At that time, K-5 virtual students would be taught by a certified St. Louis County teacher, which could be a Valley Park educator or a neighboring district teacher.
  - Students would likely participate virtually with students from other districts.
- Families who select the 6-12 virtual pathway are also committed for the entire 1st semester.
  - Their work is self-paced through our partnership with Edgenuity.
  - 6-12 virtual pathway students will complete their learning 100% independently and have their work monitored by a certified Valley Park staff member.
  - 6-12 virtual pathway students are not impacted by school resuming in-person instruction in the Fall. They will participate virtually through the entire first semester.
- Families will be provided with learning options for the second semester when the time comes.