




## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Little Rock School District Community

**FROM:** Mike Poore, Superintendent 

**DATE:** August 19, 2020

**SUBJECT:** **Reopening Our Schools and Expectations**

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The Little Rock School District (LRSD) has planned and prepared for several months to safely reopen our schools on August 24, 2020, giving our students the option of returning to campus or engaging in virtual learning. Central to both of these options is the requirement that our teachers and staff will be in their buildings and classrooms when school begins. Little Rock Education Association (LREA) president Teresa Knapp Gordon recently shared with the Little Rock community that the LREA wants Little Rock School District to provide remote learning only at the start of the school year. LREA voted to take action in the form of teachers not reporting to work at school.

The District continues to move forward with our [Ready for Learning Plan](#) that allows for a virtual or in-person learning environment for our students. Teachers should report to their assigned school and execute in-person and virtual instruction as driven by their teaching assignment. Showing up for work, especially when our students' well-being is at stake, is the most basic part of an LRSD employee's job. LRSD has policies in place stating that failure to report to work without permission "is grounds for discipline, up to and including termination."

We believe the decision of the LREA to promote a work stoppage is premature as we have diligently worked to provide an educational environment that would be in the best interest of students and parents. About half of our students have selected virtual learning, so we will have additional space in our school buildings to maintain appropriate physical distancing.

We have worked to have an infrastructure in place to open school and support the well-being of students and employees, with safety as a top priority amid our pandemic situation. We continue to welcome community feedback and closely monitor health-related issues. LRSD is committed to being vigilant and taking the additional precautions necessary to protect our students, employees, parents, and the public.

To help ensure the safety of all students and district employees, the following protocols must be followed:

- Employees and students who are experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms are NOT to report to schools or any LRSD work sites. Employees should follow advice from licensed health care providers.
- Employees should avoid physical contact with others while on the job. Reduce access to confined work areas.
- Employees and students must wear a face covering and respect a 6-foot physical distancing between themselves and others when feasible. This is a directive for all employees; failure to follow this directive is considered to be insubordination. Procedures for students who fail to follow this directive are outlined in the District's Ready for Learning Plan.
- Employees and students must comply with the Arkansas Department of Health guidelines during this pandemic.
- LRSD will continue to work to ensure safe operations, maintain work areas, and provide the necessary housekeeping practices for improved safety in the workplace during the pandemic.

As your Superintendent, I ask that you give serious consideration to your students, your school, and the District. We are professionals, and our job is to serve the students and families of this District. While everyone has a right to make an individual decision, we must continue to work hard to create a caring, inclusive learning and work environment. Direct refusal or failure to follow a directive or perform a job assignment given by a supervisor or any authorized employee or district representative is insubordination and may result in termination.

It takes all of us working together to maintain the excellence and safe working environment we want for our students and fellow employees. Thank you for your care and professionalism!