

September 3, 2020



Dear Parents:

I am pleased to announce that students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8 will be working with a third party professional online education provider, to deliver asynchronous instruction. Our teachers will not be the instructors. Students' in grades 9 through 12 online experience will be managed by the high schools and will include online courses from outside organizations and student interest driven project-based learning.

To put it simply, we do not have enough staff to serve all the grades with our teachers.. The restrictions placed on in person instruction because of the pandemic - class sizes, not allowing groups of students to co-mingle, limiting the number of students staff are interacting with, meeting physical distancing guidelines in the older schools, federal regulations connected with how we pay some of our staff - have really made it impossible.

Who is teaching at the Academy and the fact that all instruction will be asynchronous are the differences between what I shared earlier this month and what we are actually able to do. Because none of the instruction from the third party provider will be live, it offers a lot of flexibility for families to set up their own schedules. Students will still keep a direct connection to their schools through check ins and/or morning meeting times and/or social/emotional learning and we will arrange for some of our teachers to be available between 3PM and 5PM for office hours if a student has a question. We will still be looking for a Learning Partner in each household and meals will still be provided.

I know that in some circumstances this might change a family's interest in participating in online instruction and will now want to attend school in person. If you are now wanting to go to school in person, please call your school and let them know by Friday, September 4th, if possible, to work out the details. We realize that this might cause some logistical challenges and we will work with you without student attendance being affected.

Students in grades K through 8 enrolled in the Online Academy will not start their regular schedule on September 8th. Given the demands across the country on third party providers, I do not have a solid start date, but there are certain things we will need in place before that date and students will be involved in asynchronous activities. Schools will need to make arrangements for online students to pick up their devices, participate in their Fall online assessments and share the details of meal pick up. We will also be making contact with families to collect contact information for Learning Partners and to give you more details about office hours being held by our teachers outside the regular school day. We will also be providing students access to asynchronous opportunities provided by some of our staff to help with getting used to this type of learning.

Students will not be counted absent for the time between the inperson start date and the launch of the Online Academy. You will have two weeks from the official start date to make a final decision to continue with online learning, return to school in person or unenroll your student and register with the Vermont Agency of Education to homeschool. At that point, students will need to commit to their learning model for the rest of the semester.

If your students are in grades 9 through 12, the schools have been able to create an in-house Online Academy with support from our teachers. Students will have a daily schedule and will have opportunities to engage in online classes, student interest driven learning connected to required proficiencies, advisories and goal setting experience that will enhance a student's ability to be successful in this environment. A website committed to the 9 - 12 Academy is in its final stages of development and will be made live soon.

In conclusion, I'm sorry that these details have been so late in coming, but I'm also confident that we are making the best decisions for students looking to learn online. After this communication, we will be limiting our emails to the families whose students are enrolled in the Online Academy. If you are not sure if you are enrolled and wish to be, please go to the CVSU website at cvsu.org and fill out the registration form.

Looking forward,
Susette L. Bollard
Superintendent