

October 30, 2020

ascendlearning.org

Dear Ascend Families,

Thank you for your ongoing support during the continuation and improvement of remote learning. While we have made great progress in closing the gap between remote and in-person instruction, and per the most recent survey, the majority of Ascend families continue to express their preference for remote learning, we also know that remote learning does not fully meet the needs of many of our students.

School and network leaders have been working together to determine what can safely be done to continue improvement of our students' educational experiences moving forward. Throughout those conversations, we have been incorporating and sharing the feedback we have gathered from all of you, as well as from our staff.

We have also been learning from the experiences of our peers across the city, state, and nation as they have moved forward with in-person learning experiences. One of the most frequently cited components for a successful return to in-person learning is to plan to start with a small number of students, classrooms, and schools offering in-person experiences and then gradually ramp-up into serving a larger population of students once all community members have had a chance to acclimate to new procedures and schedules.

With this strategy in mind, we have reached a decision about how we will move forward for Phase Three, which begins November 30. While **all families may continue to elect 100% remote learning** for their children, Ascend schools will work to **build toward our hybrid model gradually over the next several months**. As part of that strategy, **not every Ascend school will do exactly the same thing**; the unique context of each school community will inform how we begin reopening. However, we currently plan to have **all campuses operating in hybrid learning mode by January 19, 2021**. This means that we will be able to serve some students with in-person learning, subject to capacity limits driven by new safety protocols and public health requirements. All others will remain remote.

Across the network, by November 30, a few Ascend campuses will begin welcoming very small cohorts of students in-person as we gradually ramp up to beginning in-person instruction for some students at each of our campuses. This gradual start will provide an opportunity to apply new procedures and safety protocols slowly and support a broader, all-campus opening. If your child's campus will be supporting November in-person cohorts, you will receive additional information from your school with additional details and key dates.

Additionally, **on November 9th, Ascend will open an in-person learning support center** for some students who are continuing with remote learning and will benefit from adult supervision while they access our remote classrooms in learning pods. Students have been pre-identified by Ascend's school leaders based on a variety of factors. These selected students will be able to take their online classes from a school building where they will be divided into small, physically distanced groups, and wear masks. Pod Leaders will provide supervision to students as they complete their lessons virtually and ensure they have breakfast, lunch, snack and stretch breaks throughout the day.

Students will continue to learn from their regular Ascend teacher(s) through their Ascend-issued device with the support of their Pod Leader.

If your child has been selected to participate, you will be contacted by a member of the learning support center team. Space is very limited at this time. To learn more, please contact LearningCenter@ascendlearning.org.

As fall and winter holidays approach, we want to wish all Ascend families a healthy and joyful holiday season. In light of the ongoing pandemic, we encourage you to be safe during the holidays and [adhere to CDC guidance](#), especially if you plan to travel. We do not want any Ascend students, families, or staff putting themselves or their family members at unnecessary risk during this holiday season.

Thank you for your continued support of your school and our Ascend community. Please continue to share your perspective with your student's teachers and school leaders about how we can continue to strengthen the academic experience. Your individual and collective voices remain an important influencing factor in our strategy development and decision-making.

In partnership,

Lisa Margosian
Interim CEO