



June 29, 2020

Dear Washington Township Families,

I hope this message finds you well and that you and your families are enjoying your summer break.

As you probably have heard Governor Murphy announced his long-awaited plan for reopening New Jersey Schools. Governor Murphy released State guidelines for school reopening on Friday with his plan "The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education". A copy of the plan has been attached to this eblast message and is posted on our District website and the New Jersey Department of Education website.

This plan contains a lot of information for school districts, regarding reopening. However, there are unanswered questions that will need to be addressed prior to reopening. Governor Murphy has provided some flexibility to individual school districts when managing school reopening.

Some of the key aspects of "The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education" are as follows:

- All districts are required to have some form of in-person instruction to start the school year, unless there is a significant shift in health data. Therefore, keeping school closed for complete remote learning is not an option. The guidance from the state does allow for a "hybrid" model (in-person and remote learning combination) if appropriate for the individual school district.
- All districts must have a procedure for screening staff and students for COVID-19 symptoms and a history of exposure.
- All staff and visitors will be required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit a person's individual health condition.
- Students will be strongly encouraged to wear a face covering and will be required to wear a face covering in situations where appropriate social distancing is not possible. These measures (requirements) will include school provided transportation. The state did acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may not be possible for younger children and students with special needs.
- Districts must provide additional safety features such as physical barriers to ensure social distancing and must adopt cleaning/disinfecting protocols.

As stated, the plan from the state provides many guidelines for schools to follow in its efforts to reopen schools for in-person learning, but it does not provide all of the specific answers for our district. In the upcoming weeks, the Washington Township School District will provide a more detailed plan for addressing concerns related to school reopening. The Washington Township School District has formed a School Reopening Committee to address safety concerns and academic programming for the 2020-21 school year. The Committee has already met several times and has additional meetings scheduled. As soon as detailed plans have been finalized, the information will be communicated to the school community.

Thank you to school community members who completed the Remote Learning / School Reopening Survey. The constructive feedback from the survey is being utilized by the Committee to enhance student programs and address family concerns as we restart schooling for the 2020-2021 school year.

I appreciate your continued support and patience during these extraordinary times, and I look forward to reopening schools in the safest possible manner. It has been a challenge for the staff not to see our children and we are so eager to see them again in September!

Sincerely,

Keith Neuhs
Superintendent

