

September 15, 2021

Dear Teaneck Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff,

I am pleased to report that we are off to a strong start to the school year and I want to thank everyone for your cooperation and support during this time. Our focus on the mental health of our students garnered some positive media attention: [ABC News: TPS' Mental Health Focus](#); and I had the opportunity to see this great work in action at all of our schools. You can view some of our return to school photos on our district website and Facebook page.

Of course, this does not mean that the new school year has been without some challenges. In fact, due to extreme labor shortages, we are struggling to find paraprofessionals, school nurses, lunch aides, SACC aides, and much more. There is also a national labor shortage of school bus drivers which has certainly resulted in several transportation issues for our district and throughout the State.

Additionally, we know that the Delta variant is still a challenge which is why we have put multiple layers of protection in place to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on our in-school learning. To date, we have had a couple of positive cases and it is clear that even one case can affect many. Parents and staff should continue to review and follow our COVID-19 protocols (COVID-19 section of our website). **But rest assured that if you are not notified by our contact tracing staff or your school principal, then the situation did not impact you or your child directly.** On a positive note, we have seen a very strong percentage of our staff become vaccinated; and it looks like the vaccination will become available to children who are 5 or older later this fall. To that end, we will be working towards collecting the vaccination status of our students so if a COVID case arises, a vaccinated child will not need to be quarantined unless that child is the positive case (*under current NJDOH and CDC guidance*). This information will help us to keep our children in their classroom environment.

Lastly, there is one more important matter that I want to address. Over this past week, we have heard from some families who live near our schools and who are very concerned about cars blocking their driveways or trash left on lawns. **Being a good neighbor is very important to us and I am sure it is to you too.** I ask that everyone please be mindful of where you are parking or waiting - even for a few minutes - and that no one leaves trash on anyone's property. I also ask that we all continue to be patient and considerate of one another as we are navigating through this full return to school.

I assure you that we are doing our very best to address all of the above areas and certainly invite everyone to review our job postings. If you or someone you know, meet the job qualifications, then please apply: <https://www.applitrack.com/teaneck/onlineapp/>

Now, more than ever, we must come together as a community for the sake of our children. We are off to a great start and it is incumbent upon all of us to keep up the good work.

Please remember that we are closed tomorrow (September 16) in observance of Yom Kippur.
And to our Latinx families, we wish you a Happy Latinx/Hispanic Heritage Month!

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Irving, Superintendent of Schools