

TEANECK BOARD OF EDUCATION
Office of the Superintendent of Schools

Christopher C. Irving, Ed. D.
Superintendent



August 20, 2021

Dear Teaneck Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff

In preparation for our full return (full day, Monday - Friday) to schools on September 1 for staff, and September 9 for students, I want to share important information on what you can expect as we work diligently to return to a safe and productive educational environment.

Before I provide these details, it is important to note that New Jersey is experiencing relatively high levels of COVID-19 transmission (mostly the Delta Variant) - especially among the unvaccinated. With this in mind, guidance could very well change as we head into September; so please understand that the **safety protocols outlined in this letter are effective as of today**. We will be issuing the most up-to-date guidelines immediately prior to the start of school. In fact, over the next few weeks, I strongly encourage you to frequently check your email and visit our newly designed district website (using the COVID-19 icon - www.teaneckschools.org). Additionally, I want to thank you for the overwhelming attendance to the three Town Hall events I hosted this week. Your school principals will be hosting their own Town Hall events starting on August 26. Please check the website for the full schedule and Zoom links. Lastly, I invite you to attend the upcoming Special Board Meeting on August 25 at 8 pm (virtually or in-person) where I will present our full Return to School Plan.

For now, please note the following:

2021-2022 INSTRUCTIONAL INFORMATION

Governor Murphy's announcement on May 17, 2021 stated that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded. Schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction as they were before the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. At this time, parents and guardians will not be allowed to opt their children out of in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. While we must open buildings beginning in September of 2021, remote learning will only be permitted if there is a localized outbreak or another emergency, and on an individualized case-by-case basis as appropriate.

TPS Instructional Model for the 2021-2022 School Year

- Students will be in-person for full-day instruction;
- All encore/specials will be in-person following the school schedule;
- Social and emotional well-being for families, students and staff will be a priority;
 - Professional development and other supports to facilitate Social Emotional Learning, and mental health and wellness will be provided throughout the year;
- While in-person, students will not be working primarily on Chromebooks. The Google Platform, including all Google tools, will be used to support learning across the curriculum.
 - We will continue to provide students with technology-rich experiences to ensure high-quality instruction.

651 Teaneck Road,
Teaneck, NJ 07666



Phone: 201-833-5510
Fax: 201-837-9468





- All students will be provided with devices that can be used at home and in school.
- Professional development on blended learning will be provided throughout the year.

Assessments

A new districtwide (grades K-12) universal screener will be used to gather baseline data for the 2021-2022 school year to inform and differentiate instruction as well as set targets or key progress indicators for the 2022-2023 school year.

Academic Interventions

- IXL, a comprehensive K-12 computer-based program with individualized real-time analytics, was purchased for the 2021-2022 school year for all students (kindergarten through twelfth grade) in order to support students in language arts and mathematics. This program can be used at-home and during school hours as a means for personalized academic support;
- The district will extend learning opportunities by providing:
 - Before-school and/or after-school programs;
 - Summer learning programs focused on academic and content area support.

Programming will focus on strengthening grade-level proficiency of our students.

Athletics

At this time, fall sports have commenced practicing following safe competition guidelines and protocols outlined by the NJSIAA. Mr. Murphy and the COVID response team will continue to monitor the safe competition of all of our student athletes. Prior to participation in practices or contests, all student athletes have submitted a COVID vaccination card indicating full vaccination or a negative PCR COVID test.

Cafeteria/Recess/Physical Education Guidelines

Administrators will stagger meal times to allow for social distancing. Self-serve/buffet lines will be pre-packaged options only; with some availability for students to eat meals outside or in their classrooms; and Maschio's staff will disinfect eating areas between lunch periods.

Recess will also be held in staggered shifts, with efforts to promote social distancing and hygiene protocols.

Physical education classes will be held in person and will focus on fitness. Teachers will continue to use social distancing protocols as well as limit the sharing of equipment. Classes can be held outside pending weather and field conditions.

The district will remain consistent with our protocols regarding sick leave. Staff members who are unable to come to work will be required to use their sick leave time or available FMLA/NJFLA (depending upon eligibility requirements). Any staff member needing to use either of these provisions will have to follow the existing documentation process of the Human Resource Department.

The District's COVID Response Team will continue to respond with protocols based on the most current guidance during the ever-changing developments of this pandemic response. If there is



As a need to return to all remote instruction, we will follow the same practices that were in place for the 2020-2021 school year.

2021-2022 OPERATIONAL/SAFETY PROTOCOLS

As of the date of this memorandum, Teaneck, Bergen County, and the Northeast Region all fall in the **MODERATE** transmission range under the NJDOH's Community Transmission Level (Health Matrix). In the wake of the rising prevalence of the Delta Variant of COVID-19, the District must reflect on the health and public safety guidance that comes from the CDC, NJDOH, and the Township of Teaneck. The incorporation of these guidance sources will allow the District to take the necessary steps to attempt to mitigate any further spread of the virus within the district community. As such, the District's COVID Response Team will continue to respond with protocols based on the "to-date" guidance during the ever-changing developments of this pandemic response.

MASKS:

- Pursuant to the CDC's "COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools" (August 5, 2021), all students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear a mask when in District buildings or District operated buses, regardless of vaccination status. Certain exceptions include when a student has a documented medical condition written in their IEP or 504 Plan that impacts the ability to wear a mask.
- "Masks and or barriers do not preclude an individual from being identified as a close/direct contact to a COVID-19 case" (NJDOH: The Road Forward – Section 1.3).

SOCIAL DISTANCING:

- The constraints of the given room will determine whether or not the recommended 6' distancing can be achieved, but the distance will be maintained **whenever possible**.
- The NJDOH allows for 3' of distancing in Elementary Schools, and Middle/High Schools when the Health Matrix is **MODERATE** or lower.

VACCINES:

- Vaccinated individuals, who test positive for COVID-19, will be treated as **unvaccinated** individuals for the purpose of contact tracing.
- Individuals will have quarantine times based on the NJDOH's Community Transmission Level (Health Matrix): **LOW**, **MODERATE**, **HIGH**, & **VERY HIGH**

QUARANTINE PERIODS:

- **ALL** positive individuals will be quarantined for 14 days as "best way to prevent COVID-19 transmission" (NJDOH).
- Regional risk levels with transmission of **LOW** or **MODERATE**, Direct Contacts will quarantine: 10 days without testing and void of symptoms **OR** 7 days with a negative PCR test result collected at 5-7 days after exposure.
- Regional risk levels with transmission of **HIGH**, Direct Contacts will quarantine: 14 days without testing and void of symptoms **OR** 7 days with a negative PCR test result collected at 7 days after exposure.
- Regional risk levels with transmission of **VERY HIGH**, Direct Contacts will quarantine: 14 days without testing and void of symptoms **OR** 7 days with a negative PCR test result collected at 7-10 days after exposure.



COMMUNITY NOTIFICATIONS:

- Full contact tracing investigations may take anywhere from a few hours to a few days, based on the necessary collaboration with the THD.
- Direct Contacts will be notified immediately, as they are identified in the contact tracing investigation process.
 - Confidential health information will never be shared.
 - Site based notifications will only go to the general community (site), on a weekly basis, and upon full completion of the contact tracing investigation and THD confirmation.

PROACTIVE DISTRICT RESPONSE:

- Resume Monday morning meetings with Dean Kazinci, Township Manager and Dr. Gina Miranda-Diaz, Health Officer, to discuss the previous week's local COVID impact and go-forward actions.
- Conduct weekly operations meetings of the District's Internal COVID Response Team (Mr. Cox, Officer Grundy, Nurse Aiyegbo, and Ms. Jennifer Basanti).
- The District will be collaborating with Holy Name Medical Center, to provide weekly testing opportunities for unvaccinated staff. ALL non-vaccinated staff will be required to obtain a weekly COVID Test during a designated time frame.
- The District will still offer COVID testing for our students and parents, to be coordinated during the year.
- The District is also working with Holy Name Medical Center to offer an additional vaccination date (first shots) for all students (12 and older) and staff in early September.
- Daily Wellness Checks are being evaluated.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT:

- Particular attention will be paid to community events such as: lunch, gym, recess, specials, etc.
- Principals will be given deference to make slight operational adjustments based on their building's specific needs, as long as they follow current District protocols.
- Assistant Superintendent Jimenez-Johnson will provide grade appropriate guidance in a subsequent memorandum.

BEFORE & AFTERSCHOOL CARE:

The District currently plans to offer the SACC Program beginning Monday, September 27, 2021 per the pre-k through grade 6 school schedule for before and after school hours. Registration will be online and will require payment through MySchoolBucks. We will begin the registration process in late August. Please note that the district will follow the guidance from the State and CDC, but it is our expectation for SACC to run through June 2022. For more information, please visit: <https://www.teaneckschools.org/BeforeAfterChildcareSACC.aspx>

GUIDANCE RESOURCES:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
(COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools)

<https://www.nj.gov/education/roadforward/docs/HealthAndSafetyGuidanceSY2122.pdf> (Info: NJ Road Forward & NJDOH Health Matrix)

NOTE: Mitigating the further spread of COVID-19 will truly take a team effort and commitment to vigilance. These operational considerations will remain in place until the guidance changes by either



CDC, NJDOH, or NJ Executive Order. In the event of said change, the District's protocols and responses will also change to align with the best practices of that time.

In closing, please know that the safety of our students and staff is our top priority and we are doing our very best to ensure there are multiple layers of protection as we return to school. I hope you will join us for the August 25 Board meeting and for the Principal Town Hall Meetings taking place beginning August 26. For more information on these events, please visit the district and school websites. Thank you.

Best regards,

Dr. Christopher Irving, Superintendent of Schools