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August 21, 2020

Dear Readington Community,

At the Board of Education meeting this past Tuesday, I provided further detail related to the *Readington Ready* restart plan for schools. I informed members of the Board of Education and members of our school community of our detailed, thoughtful preparations and of various factors that could change the trajectory of our school reopening plans. I write to you today to inform you of a change in our start of school plans.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented layers of hurdles for families throughout our state and our county; the Readington community is no exception - including our staff. As districts throughout our region close and opt for a fully remote start to the year, the challenge grows. Our analysis of the staff's medical leave under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and child care leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) have presented us with significant challenges to fully staff our buildings. Therefore, in order to preserve the best educational opportunities for our students, the district has made the difficult decision to implement a fully virtual start to the 2020-2021 school year beginning on September 3. There will be no A/B rotation for students to start the year. Our district and the Board of Education plan to reassess the public health issue and staffing in mid-October for a potential Monday, October 19 start to in-person instruction.

We will use this time to deliver a high-quality, robust course of study to our students remotely with our talented teaching and support staff leading your children through this unusual time. I am reminded of our guiding principles when we began the process of reopening schools: *To provide for the health and safety of our staff and students while implementing a cohesive, consistent educational program amid a global pandemic.* This is the best option to maintain our principles.

During this 6-week time period, students and parents can expect a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences from teachers for all of the content areas. The schedules "at a glance" are provided on page 32 of the *Readington Ready* plan. All students will meet daily with his/her teachers in the morning with virtual learning at Readington Middle School running from 7:35-12:05, Holland Brook School running from 7:40-12:10, and Whitehouse School and Three Bridges School running from 8:30-1:00 with an additional required instructional period, office hours, small group support, and one-on-one support each afternoon. More specific scheduling information will come from your building principal.

Adjusting the timeline for the hybrid model our district has worked so hard to develop will impact family schedules and parents' abilities to work outside of the home. Our district does not take this action lightly. These concerns were presented this past Tuesday and analyzed for solutions over the course of this week. We spent time discussing and deliberating the pros and cons of each decision we make, and we are sensitive to the fact that families must now shift their plans.

Child care may become a greater obstacle for many of our families. In order to assist families in securing child care, our YMCA is prepared to offer expanded child care programs in our school buildings. We are hopeful that offering additional child care opportunities will solve some scheduling issues for families. Please visit the YMCA website at <https://www.hcymca.org/child-learning-center/before-and-after-school-programs/> or contact the YMCA using the following contact information: email Stephanie at [sflawreck@hcymca.org](mailto:sflawreck@hcymca.org) or Wendy at [wcrocetti@hcymca.org](mailto:wcrocetti@hcymca.org).

As you may recall, our *Readington Ready* plan had two unique components for certain students. First, we offered our self-contained special education students the opportunity to attend school in-person four (4) days per week. We will continue to offer this on an early dismissal schedule. Parents of eligible self-contained students will be contacted by the Pupil Services Office with further detail about attending our in-person program. Second, our district provided appointments for parents and students in grades kindergarten and first to attend an in-person orientation on September 3 and 4. We will continue to offer these appointments for parents and our youngest students to learn about digital tools in a hands-on manner. Your building principal will be in touch with further information regarding any changes. We anticipate the course schedules and homeroom teachers being available to parents no later than Tuesday, August 25.

We will continue to work tirelessly to welcome students back to school as soon as we are able. We look forward to that day, until then we will come together as the Readington Community to continue the excellent social, emotional, and academic traditions that are embedded into everyday learning. Let's remember that we empower members of our community to lead purposeful lives with integrity, to cultivate a spirit of discovery, and to embrace connections in our diverse, global society. We will continue to live this mission as we prepare to open schools remotely in September. As always, we appreciate your patience as we navigate these uncharted waters.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Hart, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools