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November 20, 2020

Dear Readington Parents and Guardians,

Over the course of the past few weeks, the COVID situation across the state and in our region has evolved. Thank you to our teachers, staff, students, and parents for their hard work and dedication to learning in the face of so many challenges that change on a sometimes daily basis.

This increasing number of COVID-19 cases across the region has now changed the rules that govern school responses to the virus. The Department of Health (DOH) classifies the spread of the virus through color coding. Each Thursday, the DOH publishes reports on the classification for each region here: <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>

In weeks past, we were classified as the color “yellow,” which indicates moderate risk of spread. We therefore exclude a positive COVID-19 case and quarantine any individuals considered in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 cumulative minutes over a 24-hour period) with the positive case. **Our region has now entered the new designation of “orange” which indicates a high risk of spread. We now must exclude any individuals who display COVID-19 compatible symptoms and quarantine any individuals within close contact of the symptomatic individual for 14 days.** In other words, we must begin treating a symptomatic case as a probable positive case. These changes will likely result in more contact tracing, more quarantine, and potentially more disruption to the hybrid schedule, such as unplanned remote learning days for students. If a symptomatic case is identified after 5:00 p.m. we may need to hold a remote day the following day to contact trace.

This new protocol makes it critically important for **parents to fill out the mandatory COVID-19 Assurance Form any day your child attends school.** If your child is not attending school because it is a virtual day but your child develops symptoms, please be sure to call the office or school nurse to notify us of any COVID-19 compatible symptoms. Although your child is not attending school, we may need to contact trace based on attendance within the previous 48 hours. The district must have your assurance and cooperation that you will notify us of symptoms in order to prevent any potential spread.

The Readington Township School District is committed to remaining open on a hybrid schedule as we enter a new phase of the pandemic. In order to do this successfully, we must have your assistance in adhering to social distancing and travel restrictions put in place by Governor Murphy. A 14-day quarantine for staff or students disrupts the educational process. Simply stated, please remember to stay home, limit your contact with others, and maintain healthy hygiene.

As I communicated in my previous letter, we've seen higher COVID cases throughout the county, state and region. School superintendents received information from the Hunterdon County Health Department informing us of the specific increases of positive cases in our county. According to the Hunterdon County Health Department, there were 15 cases related to schools during the week of November 2. Last week there were over 25 cases in school-aged children in the county. In the same week overall daily case reports ranged from 22 to 42 cases per day county-wide and Hunterdon's 7-day average is 30.8 cases per day. This is the highest weekly rate of cases to date, surpassing the highest weekly rate in the spring. The rate of transmission in the county is 1.07 and in the state it is 1.38. We must continue to be vigilant to protect our school community from transmission.

Finally, in an effort to ensure everyone understands our current COVID protocols, we have created a video. The video includes a brief introduction, a walk-through of a classroom, some pictures from around the district, and a presentation with updated COVID information. The district is providing this to demonstrate our safety precautions and allow you an insider glimpse into our school day. To access the video, navigate to our YouTube page on the Readington School District website or [click here](#).

Again, and during this time of giving thanks, I am so grateful for the hard work of our staff, students, and parents. Your adherence to disease prevention has provided a safe environment for teaching and learning. Let's continue to work together to provide for the health and safety of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Hart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jonathan Hart, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools