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July 29, 2021

Dear Readington School Community,

The end of July is near which means many of you have begun thinking about the return to school. We, too, look forward to having students and staff return in September. In early July, the Governor and the Department of Education released a document titled *The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year*. Over the past few weeks the leadership team has read and discussed the document in order to make plans for the start of school. This letter is an initial update on school reopening plans. Much of what is in this letter was shared with the public at the June 8, 2021 Board of Education meeting and in our *Safe Return* plan, which can be found on our website. Please know that our plans remain flexible and responsive to any future guidance from the Department of Health or the Department of Education.

School Schedule and General Protocols:

- We are planning a return to full-day, full-time, in-person instruction for all students for the 2021-2022 school year. The first day for students is Wednesday, September 8, 2021. Please review the school calendar for scheduled early dismissal days.
- Lunch will be provided in our cafeterias. We will begin the year with pre-packaged options and expand our offerings within the first few weeks of school. Each building is working on a schedule/set up to maintain additional distances between students in cafeterias.
- A breakfast program will be provided for students who wish to participate. Details will be forthcoming.
- We will offer a 3-foot distance between student desks to the extent possible in classrooms.
- One (1) COVID Assurance Form/list of signs and symptoms will be provided at the beginning of the school year. Parents are asked to monitor signs and symptoms of COVID and keep ill students home.
- Handwashing and hand sanitizing opportunities will continue and teachers will be encouraged to build these hygiene opportunities into their classroom routines. Respiratory etiquette will be taught to students.
- Enhanced sanitizing will continue into the new school year.
- We will continue to bring in outside air for ventilation purposes.
- Based on guidance from the Department of Health, we will continue to contact trace when a positive case involves school.
- We will begin offering sports and extracurricular activities during the school year.

Masks:

The Governor had announced that masks are optional for the 2021-2022 school year. In our summer programs, such as Extended School Year (ESY) and Summer Enrichment, we have provided mask flexibility. We have allowed vaccinated individuals the option of wearing a mask if s/he chooses. Unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to wear masks, but not mandated. It is unclear if this will continue to be the practice in the fall, as the CDC continues to adjust recommendations. We are currently waiting for more information from public health officials considering the status of the COVID situation has changed in the past few weeks. Final determinations about mask wearing will be provided before the start of school. The Department of Education guidance does make it clear that masks will be required on school buses.

Instructional Delivery:

It has been made clear that the Department of Education requires full-time, in-person instruction to allow the days to count toward the 180-day requirement. Therefore, we are unable to provide a virtual option this year. However, students who are subject to quarantine may be allowed to participate in virtual instruction in order to maintain their school work. We are currently working out the details for delivery of this instruction in the coming weeks.

Discussions continue in the district and we will communicate with families as final decisions are made. Until then, enjoy the rest of the summer! We look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

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

Jonathan Hart, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools