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March 5, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Today we celebrate the accomplishment of bringing students back for expanded in-person learning. It has been two weeks having our K-5 learners back in school four days/week and a week with our middle schoolers in-person four days/week. This has been achieved through hard work and dedication from the Board of Education, administration, teachers, staff, parents, and our students. My walkthroughs of our school buildings show students engaged in learning and excited to have achieved this step of returning to some sense of normalcy. By enlarge our transition has gone very well. We continue to refine our protocols with regard to parent drop-off and pick-up as well as transition periods during the school day. Of course, we must remember that we are still in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there have been signs and signals of improvement, and perhaps light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we must not overlook this reality.

**Remain vigilant.** Our continued success with remaining in-person with a vast majority of students back in classrooms hinges on our adherence to CDC and state-level protocols. For almost two weeks in February our district did not report any positive student or staff cases of COVID-19. As of this week, we have already reported six positive COVID-19 cases across our district. This increase in the level of COVID-19 cases related to our district is concerning. This combined with some increases noted in the [COVID Activity](#) report are signaling that the pandemic is not yet over. **I must emphasize the importance of remaining vigilant outside of school to ensure our schools can remain open. Increases in COVID-19 cases in our schools will result in the mass quarantining of staff and/or students and possibly school-wide closures for a period of 10 to 14 days.** I urge you to please be mindful of our protocols: keep your child home if ill, avoid unnecessary travel and if you do travel you must quarantine for 10 days, and monitor your social gatherings. Our collective success depends on all of us doing our part.

**Student Attendance.** I would like to remind families that consistent, prompt attendance is essential to student success. If your family has opted for in-person learning your child is expected to attend school all four days in-person. We understand the virtual option is available, but this option should only be used if your child is ill, has COVID symptoms, or is quarantined. This is not intended to be flexibility for families to travel or students to “sleep in late.” Attendance continues to be monitored by the building principals and school nurses on a case-by-case basis. The school will communicate with parents if or when student attendance becomes concerning.

**Travel.** New Jersey continues to strongly discourage all non-essential interstate travel. Travel poses a risk to you and your child's health and should not occur unless necessary. Families returning from any U.S. state or territory beyond the immediate region (NY, CT, PA, DE) should self-quarantine at home for at least 10 days or may test out of quarantine 3-5 days after return from travel. The school district is enforcing this travel restriction for the safety of our staff and students. We expect families to honestly report any interstate travel and follow the guidelines set forth by our school nurses. Please review the [NJ Travel restrictions](#) for more information.

**Calendar.** The school calendar has been revised to accommodate snow days. As indicated on the calendar the following Wednesdays will remain fully virtual: March 17 and April 14. Prepare for the following Wednesdays to be in-person days due to holidays/in-service: March 24, March 31, May 26, June 2 (unless we get more snow).

We thank you for your continued support and patience as we navigate this unusual school year. Our district is committed to our mission of empowering members of our community to lead purposeful lives with integrity, to cultivate a spirit of discovery, and to embrace connections in this diverse global world. By working together, we can achieve our goal!

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