



September 18, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Rumson School District,

Today marks two weeks that our doors have been open again. It is wonderful to have teachers and students back in the building. Although donned with masks and given little movement in the hallways, the students' presence back in our classrooms is comforting.

With that said, our aim is to keep them here. While our school system cannot control the state of this pandemic, we are focused on ensuring our procedures keep our students in school safely. Over the past two weeks, we have monitored and tweaked protocols for entry, screening, and movement in the building. Adjustments to increase and maximize instructional time have been and will continue to be made to our virtual and full remote schedules. Additional adjustments are forthcoming once we get through our first full cycle of instruction towards the end of September. Additionally, we have, in partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health and The Monmouth County Health Commission, guided parents in responding to symptoms, exposures, and quarantining for their children outside of school. With so much in the media about school reopenings and closures, it makes me genuinely proud of what we have put together and how far we have come. *Assuming this success continues*, I look forward to announcing additional updates to our in-person learning plan towards the end of September with the hope of bringing us another step closer to normalcy.

We are not, however, immune to future closures, and it is for this reason that I send you this letter.

- **Completing the Genesis Questionnaire is mandatory!** Please complete this each morning before 7:45am on those days your child is scheduled to come into school.
 - Although this is another thing to do in the morning, the questionnaire has already allowed us to intervene and keep students home that may have been exposed to COVID.
 - We have 20-25 students each morning who are not admitted to class because the questionnaire is not complete. This oversight impacts their time in class and directs staffing resources away from other duties.
 - The admission of an exposed student is what will cause a class or cohort to move to full virtual instruction.
 - To help, we have set a reminder to be texted to you each morning at 7:30am.
 - You can download the site to your home screen on your smartphone or save to favorites on your smartphone for easy access.

- **Third-party service providers used during the academic day - be they an instructional Pod, trainer, tutor, or the like - must follow the District schedule for instruction!** We understand that some families have invested in a range of providers to support their children during virtual instruction and in the full remote setting. We want to support whatever our families feel is prudent for them in these difficult times.
 - However, only parents and students are recognized when District and classroom responsibilities fail to be met. School staff will only communicate directly with parents/guardians regarding their children.
 - We find that some students are missing instruction - to be clear, they are absent - because the third party's schedule conflicts with the official Rumson District one. This cannot

- happen and parents must work with their vendors to make necessary adjustments to support their child's District schedule.
- We will be notifying parents directly when their child misses a scheduled class, and Code of Conduct actions are in effect for appropriate grade levels.
 - **Attendance procedures remain in effect, as directed by the New Jersey Department of Education!** We appreciate the support of parents who keep their children home when they have questions about their exposure outside of school and when they may show symptoms listed on the Genesis Questionnaire. It is best to exercise caution in this environment for the safety of all!
 - If your child is kept home due to quarantining or isolation related to COVID-19, the school will contact you regarding a plan for continued academics. Students will not be marked as absent, as long as they complete the academic plan developed.
 - If your child is kept home for any other reason, they will be marked absent. If the absence continues beyond two days, please reach out to the school nurse to discuss; we will follow up with an appropriate course of action for continued academics and consider associated measures for not being marked absent from that point.
 - **Please be vigilant in ensuring you are minimizing exposure to COVID-19 outside the school day!** While we do not want to see our children isolated from peers, family, or experiences, we ask that you consider the impact decisions outside of school may have on our ability to remain open for teaching and learning.
 - Whether we remain open and move closer to normalcy as a school depends entirely on the decisions made by parents and students outside of the school day.
 - Despite our many protocols in place as a school, impacts on school schedules and procedures would still occur in reaction to developments outside of school.

A month ago, I was naturally uncertain about the state of schools for reopening for the 2020-2021 school year. Experiencing the past two weeks has encouraged me to believe we can sustain this. I hope you are equally optimistic while remaining grounded that our progress towards more normal school days can change instantly. Thank you for your support of a great opening to the school year and I look forward to our continued partnership in igniting the potential of our students. Please join us for our **Virtual Back To School Nights at 6:30PM on October 6th for Forrestdale and October 7th for Deane-Porter** (changed from October 8th due to conflict with existing event). More information to come from your child's principal.

With pride,

Dr. John E. Bormann
Superintendent of the Borough of Rumson School District