



September 23, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Rumson School District,

This correspondence arrives as we complete the twelfth and final day of our full instructional cycle for the new school year. Arriving at this day means our efforts in building a system of protocols to keep our students and staff healthy and safe are successful. To date, we have a few students on quarantine as a result of the responsible reporting of parents and those parents keeping them home. A continuation of this communication with the school and appropriate caution in sending students to school will enable us to remain on a path to full-in person instruction.

In reflecting on these past twelve days, we can all come to realize that what we have actually done is reinvent schools and classrooms. While schools have gone through adjustments and changes in practice since first made compulsory in Massachusetts back in 1852, our current parents and educators have witnessed relatively the same operations since our days in Kindergarten. While we may all not want this reinvention and its necessary adjustments, we need to celebrate the accomplishment of what has been required of all of us.

While proud of where we are on this twelfth day, it is crucial to recognize what needs further improvement. As promised in the summer parent restart meetings and school opening letters, we have assessed our first cycle of instruction and made a determination of next steps. In moving forward, it is not time to reinvent. Instead, we must follow the lessons of our own STEM teachers and improve our plan to produce the next iteration of schooling. And once that improvement occurs, repeat. In doing so, it is my goal to bring those iterations to a point where all students are back in school daily, retaining all we have learned about technology, instruction, and social-emotional support during the hybrid and virtual instructional modes.

Accordingly, we will be **bringing back the following students four days a week for a 1:00pm dismissal schedule beginning on Tuesday, September 29, 2020**. These groups will remain virtual on Mondays, but will attend school in-person Tuesday-Friday.

- Kindergarten Students
- Resource Room Special Education Students

We are able to do this as a result of the ability to maintain social distancing and other health measures for these populations of students. We will monitor this next week and determine the return of additional grade-levels and groups of students to in-person instruction four days a week. Again, please know this intent depends entirely on our continued efforts in screening students and parents keeping open dialogue with us regarding possible exposures outside of school and caution in sending students to school with possible symptoms. To be clear, if all of us are able to continue this momentum, **we are aiming to roll additional students back to in-person instruction four days a week consistently throughout the month of October**.

To that end, we will focus on getting the remainder of our students ready to transition back to in-person instruction and have made the following revisions to our hybrid plan **beginning on Tuesday, September 29, 2020.**

1. A/B Cohort Homeroom Daily (Gr 4 - 8 effective September 29; Gr 2 & 3 to follow at a later date): Students home on their virtual days will join their in-school peers via Google Hangout each morning during homeroom and Morning Meeting. At this time, the teachers will focus on community building, social-emotional guidance, school messaging, and attendance. ***Attendance at this session will be mandatory and will be the basis for counting their day as present in school; therefore, students will no longer need to complete the attendance form on their at-home learning days.***

2. Playlist Posting: The morning of their virtual day students will have access to all assignments to be completed that day. ***This playlist is not homework for the in-person days, but instead their assignments for their virtual day. Anything they need to do for the homework on their in-person days will be assigned additionally. It is important that students and parents consult with teachers or check Genesis for missing assignments.***

3. Virtual Assignments: The following framework for assignments will be followed by teachers.

Math	45-60 minutes per child each virtual day
ELA	45- 60 minutes per child each virtual day
Science (6-8 only)	30-45 minutes per child each virtual day
Social Studies	30-45 minutes per child each virtual day
World Language (6-8 only)	15-30 minutes per child each virtual day

Please be aware that hitting this target of time will require teachers to differentiate assignments for each child to meet their readiness level. Therefore, comparison of assignments from student to student or classroom to classroom is not an accurate one. If your child is doing more or less than the time outlined in this section, please contact your child's teacher. The teacher will ensure the work is adjusted accordingly but will not assign additional work outside these time frames.

4. Post 1:00pm Session: Due to social distancing protocols, one of the items we are finding difficult to achieve to the degree we desire is small group instruction. This is an area we value and find to be highly effective in differentiating instruction. Therefore we will be utilizing the 2:00pm to 2:30pm timeframe for this purpose in a virtual format (this assigned time may vary for the All Virtual Cohort of students due to teacher schedules).
 - a. Special Education Students - Extra Support/Study Skills daily for both cohorts A/B together
 - b. Grades K-5 Students - Guided Reading and Math groups on a rotating scheduled basis
 - c. Grades 6-8 Students- Assigned extra support/study skills sessions
 - d. All identified Students- basic skills and gifted & talented servicesAttendance at these sessions will be mandatory and students from both cohorts A and B will be participating. For example, students home virtually will attend and students on in-person days will attend virtually once they are home from school.

5. Monday Schedule: We will remain on virtual instruction for both Cohorts A and B together on Mondays. **Beginning on October 5th, our next Monday in session, Mondays will be a full day schedule with core subjects and specials.** Appropriate task-time on the computer will be arranged by grade-level.

For all of these items, your child's teacher will follow up with more specifics.

“Adversity does not build character, it reveals it,” shared by author James Lane Allen, serves to summarize where we are as a school community today. I want to commend our students for revealing their resilience in following our health measures in school and navigating their new learning environment, our teachers for revealing their commitment to effectively juggling our in-school and virtual cohorts and being partners in ensuring high quality education, and our parents for revealing their support and trust that will keep our goal focused on bringing our students back to in-person instruction. It is in these revelations and many more that continue to make me proud of what we have and continue to accomplish together!

With pride,

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