



October 8, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Rumson School District,

In my past few letters to the school community, I have shared both my pride in the vigilance demonstrated by our students, staff, and parents, as well as my realism that COVID-19 will impact our schools at some point. This week, we felt the two forces come together when we had an individual report that they had tested positive for COVID. Through consultation with the Monmouth County Health Commission and other medical experts in partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health, we conducted an immediate investigation of the situation.

Per CDC guidelines, the outcome necessitated the quarantining of specific individuals in close contact with the positive individual. The ability to isolate the quarantining and not move classes, cohorts, or schools to virtual instruction results from the active use of established protocols carried out by the staff that minimized the number of close contacts.

While we can all take a moment to be thankful for the staff's use of established protocols, this is a reality check of how important the entry screening protocols, wearing of masks, use of plexiglass barriers, and frequent sanitizing are for us all.

That stated, we have to weigh our next steps in the district and the consideration of often countervailing information it entails. We know that the survey results from parents outline a significant desire to have students return to in-person instruction. We have learned that the hybrid mode of instruction is not ideal for long-term instruction or learning. We see that the protocols we have in place enable us to maintain in-person instruction. Finally, in addition to this week's COVID positive situation, we expect that the early winter months may pose higher transmission rates.

With all of this in mind, **we believe there is a window of opportunity to increase in-person instruction over the next few weeks.** There are certainly risks we need to watch carefully. With increased student numbers in school, social distancing is minimized and the possibility of quarantining more students exposed to a COVID positive individual increases. As a result, any return to in-person instruction must and will continue to be cautiously done.

Tuesday, October 13th all students in **first and second grade** will return for in-person instruction Tuesday through Friday. These will be **1:00pm dismissal** days. **Mondays will remain full virtual** for all students. *During this transition time, if you are considering a return from full remote to in-person or in-person to full remote please contact your principal, Ms. Feeney.*

Tuesday, October 20th all students in **grade four** will return for in-person instruction Tuesday through Friday. These will be **1:00pm dismissal** days. **Mondays will remain full virtual** for all students. *During this transition time, if you are considering a return from full remote to in-person or in-person to full remote please contact your principal, Mrs. Gibbons.*

We will monitor this transition to in-person instruction very closely and make additional announcements for other grade levels in the future. We know some parents are anxious to make this transition for all as soon as possible and we know other parents are quite apprehensive about the changes occurring. Out of respect for this spectrum of feelings, we ask for your support in making this transition work safely, effectively, and appropriately.

As the school focuses on this return of students to in-person instruction, we ask that you remain committed to making decisions beyond the school day that support our ability to stay the course within the school day. To highlight one: as November and December approach, there are many school breaks that pose critical concerns for staying this course. As we return our students to in-person instruction we must consider the implications such decisions as vacations and visits outside of the state will have on the operation of our schools upon the return to school. In decisions like these, we can make the difference for what school days will look like in the future.

With pride,

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