



August 27, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

One week from today your child will have experienced their first day of school for the 2020-2021 school year. Although this global pandemic has challenged us all in so many ways, thanks to the amazing efforts of our administration, custodial staff, teaching staff, support staff, PTO, Board of Education, and the support of so many parents and community members we are able to look forward to this being an amazing year.

This year “Back to School” photos will be dotted with masks, parents will be adding hand sanitizer to their children’s daily morning routine, and a kiss on the forehead of your child as you send them off to school will be preceded by a few swipes on our screening app. While things will be different you can be assured that we have taken all the care to ensure your child will be safe, supported, and academically successful during their school days. This effort has been ongoing all summer and we are happy to share that it has been supported and guided by the *Hackensack Meridian Health Assist Program for Reopening America*.

More than ever, you will be entering into this school year with many questions, anxieties, and uncertainties. In an effort to help you navigate this guidance the following information will be coming over the next few days:

1. District Hybrid Handbook for Parents created by our Principals, Ms. Feeney & Mrs. Gibbons
2. Student Schedules for In-Person Days, Virtual Days, and Full Remote Students released by our Principals, Ms. Feeney & Mrs. Gibbons
 - Grades 1, 2, 3, & 5 Homeroom Teachers on or about Friday, August 28th (PreK, K, and 4th Grade were already released with the orientation information this past week.)
 - 6-8 Student Schedules on or about Friday, August 28th
 - Full Remote Student Schedules on or about Monday, August 31
 - K-5 Virtual Day Schedules on or about Tuesday, September 1
3. District Guide to Virtual Learning created by our Supervisor of Curriculum, Mrs. Ridoux
4. A Reopening Virtual Tour of our buildings created by our Administrative Team

I know you have been very patient in waiting for this information and we appreciate this a great deal. The planning behind what you will read and see has been a monumental task and it is bringing us “down to the wire” to have it all ready!

I know there has been much anticipation about what the first days of school will look like. This has been a question we have been pondering and working through ourselves as a school district. In the best interest of all of our K-8 students, we are announcing that our first days of school, **September 3rd and 4th will be virtual with both Cohort A and Cohort B together**. Our full remote students will begin the year the same way within their full remote homeroom. *Pre-Kindergarten classes will begin their school year in-person on September 3rd at their regularly scheduled times.*

The reasons for this virtual start for our K-8 students are as follows:

- Bringing Cohort A and B together will start the year off with a sense of community. In this community they can build a relationship across cohorts, celebrate their return to school, and establish routines and procedures for their in-person and virtual days.

- Doing so virtually allows students to see their teacher for the first time without a mask, see each other with the giant smiles the first day brings, and get them prepared for seeing their teacher and classmates once in school with masks on. In addition, before students enter the school, the teacher can prepare them for the entry procedures and classroom routines so that students will feel more comfortable with what they will be doing and experiencing.
- Bringing Cohort A and B together and doing so virtually allows for equity of both groups. For the support of our children's social and emotional well being, having neither group be the first group and countering perceptions of who came on the "real first day of school" is important.
- In preparing for Tuesday, September 8th the teachers can get Cohort A ready for their first day in school and Cohort B ready for their first virtual day through virtual breakout sessions.

For our Virtual Welcome Days on September 3rd and 4th we ask parents to have their children go to the district website promptly at 9:00AM and follow these instructions:

1. Go to the district website www.rumsonschool.org
2. Click on the Virtual Learning Tab at the top left of the website.
3. Click on your child's school. (Deane-Porter or Forrestdale)
4. Click on your child's Grade Level.
5. Click on your child's Homeroom Teacher.
6. Further instructions will be listed on the Homeroom Teacher's page.

In preparation for this, we will have students pick up their Chromebooks and chargers on a schedule set for September 1st (full remote students only) and September 2nd (all other students in the district). Specific instructions and the schedule can be found by clicking here: [CHROMEBOOK PICK UP SCHEDULE](#). We ask that Chromebooks for all students in the district are picked up at the designated time, even if you have your own device at home.

With students entering the school buildings beginning on September 8th for Cohort A and September 9th for Cohort B (except for PreK, which will all enter on September 3rd), we will begin our screening processes with students. This will be inclusive of parents completing a screening app before 7:45AM each day for each child and children being thermally scanned as they are entering the building. Parents will be sent instructions for downloading the screening app from their phone's app store as well as instructions on how to complete the CDC-based questionnaire in the app early next week.

This year we continue our effort in "Igniting Potential"; the potential of each student as an individual and all of the students collectively as a school community. Soon, after we get the school year started, I look forward to providing you with an update on the many great things occurring in our schools for the 2020-2021 school year, including updates on our referendum construction.

As you close out your last few days of the summer season, I urge you all to do what you can to table your anxieties and fears for a moment, and cherish your families and children. Enjoy that day on the beach, bike ride through town, or BBQ in the backyard. The school year will be there after you awake from your focus on creating great final summer memories with family and as partners we will move through this school year together...resolutely, safely, and successfully!

With pride,

John E. Bormann

John E. Bormann, Ed. D.
Superintendent