The Road Forward Updates
Dr. Joseph Meloche & Dr. Kwame Morton
July 27, 2021
WE Return to Learn – District Mission Statement

WE shall provide all children with an education that develops open-minded thinkers with the strong academic and interpersonal skills to thrive **in an ever-changing world** and make it a better place for all.
WE Return to Learn – BOE Strategic Goals

*Building upon our strong foundations of academic excellence, inclusion, voice, and cultural proficiency, we will:*

**Student Wellness**
Create frameworks of learning and supports for all students to develop the skills needed for social and emotional wellness.

**Purpose & Passion**
Develop highly engaging learner-centered experiences within an environment that promotes voice, choice, and passion for learning.

**Connecting Beyond Our Classrooms**
Provide resources, opportunities, and experiences for our students to connect to the world beyond their classrooms and to become informed and empathetic agents of change in the world.
The District is committed to the following -

- The health & safety of students and staff members.
- Regularly scheduled school days for all students.
- Breakfast and Lunch being available and scheduled for students.
- Working in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education, New Jersey Department of Health, and the Camden County Department of Health to remain informed about the status of community health.
- Communicating information transparently with the students, families, staff members, and community.
Summer Acceleration and Remediation

- Programs have been running very well!
- Thank you to all of the students, family members, and staff members who have contributed to the success of this initiative.
The revised Continuity of Learning Plan is in draft form and is continuing to be developed for the 2021-2022 academic year.

○ The plan incorporates the work from the 2020-2021 academic year and the current recommendations from the NJDOE and NJDOH.
○ A revised draft of the plan will be presented to the Board of Education, and the community, on August 10, 2021.

Highlights of the Plan

○ The focus is on the opening of school & the social emotional well being of students and staff
○ Consistent expectations for daily, at home screening
○ Consistent & transparent communication with families - by schools & by the District
○ There are contingencies that will be included in the final document if the District is required to transition to a hybrid model or a full remote
○ The only way that Cherry Hill will not operate with regular school days if through an Executive Order from the Governor or a written directive from the NJDOH/CCDOH, based upon the community health situation
What we know, as of July 27, 2021 Regarding Masks

● The NJDOE and NJDOH released The Road Forward, and a companion website, on June 28th.
● Recommendations and guidance address five key areas for school districts:
  ○ 1. General Health and Safety Guidelines
  ○ 2. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow
  ○ 3. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff
  ○ 4. Contact Tracing
  ○ 5. Testing
● About masks, the guidance says:
  ○ “Updated CDC guidance on masking in this setting is expected prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and will factor into the final recommendations from the State for masking this fall. This guidance will be updated following that release.” page 5
  ○ We have not yet received an update from NJDOH or NJDOE.
What we know, as of July 27, 2021 Regarding Masks

- The CDC released [updated guidelines](#) on July 9, 2021
  - “Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.”
  - “Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated. Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.”
  - There was an announcement earlier today, that the CDC is releasing revised guidelines regarding masks in schools.
    - “CDC officials also recommended universal masking for teachers, staff, students and visitors in schools, regardless of vaccination status and community transmission of the virus. With additional precautions, schools nonetheless should return to in-person learning in the fall, according to agency officials.” [New York Times, July 27, 2021](#)
    - We will review the updated information when it is released directly from the CDC.
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released updated guidance and recommendations on July 18, 2021

- “The AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for school COVID-19 plans should start with a goal of keeping students safe and physically present in school.”
- “The AAP believes that, at this point in the pandemic, given what we know about low rates of in-school transmission when proper prevention measures are used, together with the availability of effective vaccines for those age 12 years and up, that the benefits of in-person school outweigh the risks in almost all circumstances.”
- “All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use).”

- The AAP recommends universal masking in school at this time
What we know, as of July 27, 2021 Regarding Masks

- Governor Murphy, whose executive order directed the use of masks in schools for the 2020-2021 academic year, has made a number of comments in recent weeks about the current status of masks:
  - On June 28, 2021, Governor Murphy announced at his press briefing that, “Absent any dramatic change in our situation before the beginning of the school year, masking by students while in their school buildings will NOT be mandatory - unless a school district requires masking as part of its own protocols.”
  - A recent excerpt from the Governor’s July 20th appearance on CNBC’s “Squawkbox”:
    - Asked whether New Jersey would follow LA County’s action on masks, Murphy said, “For the time being, I hope we don’t have to do that.” In general, the governor said New Jersey does not want to put Covid restrictions, most of which were lifted by early June, back in place. “If we have to, we will,” he cautioned. “I hope … we’re going to be able to stay where we are, but you never say never,” Murphy added. “This virus dictates the terms, not us, and we’ll continue to watch it like a hawk.”
What we know, as of July 27, 2021 Regarding Masks

- On July 23, 2021, Assemblywoman Pam Lampitt, who represents our community, shared the following information in a tweet:
  - “With the @CDCgov (Center for Disease Control) & @AmerAcadPeds (the American Academy of Pediatrics) recommending masking in schools for the upcoming academic year, it is critical that NJ consider reinstating mask requirements for students & staff, especially for those who are unvaccinated.”
  - Assemblywoman Lampitt is the Chair of the Assembly Education Committee
  - We continue to reach out to our legislators for clarity and information
Preparing for the Reopening of Schools on September 9, 2021

“Yay for Full Day!”
WE Return to Learn - The Road Forward 2021-2022

- **A Focus on Students’ and Staff Social & Emotional Wellness and Mental Health**
  - Transitioning back to full time, in person instruction on September 9, 2021
  - Inservice days prior to school reopening will include preparation to meet the social and emotional challenges of the transition for students and staff.
  - Focused training throughout the year by Thrive Alliance for counseling staff.

- **Curriculum & Instruction**
  - Preparing for the academic needs of the students, based on last year’s experience and this year’s expectations

- **Planning the Instructional Day**
  - Including breakfast and lunch times
  - Classroom setup & movement within the building

- **Remote Accessibility and Technology**
  - The district will continue to ensure that the digital divide is closed and all students and staff have access to the technology necessary to be successful including:
    - All students have access to devices & internet connectivity they can take home.
    - Technology support and troubleshooting via online platform, remote access calls, email, and video conference
Masks
- Masks must be worn on school buses at all times
- As we continue to wait for an update from the NJDOH and NJDOE, we believe it is too early to make a definitive statement about mask wearing inside the school buildings
  - This was a key area of discussion during yesterday’s committee meeting
  - This is a primary focus for many families in the District
    - There are two very different perspectives in among parents regarding mandatory masking
- Our Current Masking Considerations -
  - Required masking for all staff and students
  - Optional masking for COVID-19 vaccinated staff and students
  - Optional masking for all staff and students
WE Return to Learn - The Road Forward 2021-2022

The Road Forward Committee includes:

- Administrative & Certificated Staff from:
  - PreK/Elementary, Middle & High School Levels
- Support Services
- Non-certificated/support staff
- Board of Education Members
- Parents
- Community Members

- Meetings dates: July 26th, August 8th, August 19th, September 1st
- Building based Pandemic Response Teams will reconvene in August 2021.
- Students will continue to participate in the Pandemic Response Teams.
The District is encouraging all who are eligible, to be fully vaccinated prior to the first day of school.

The District is again hosting vaccination clinics for all staff and students who would like to be vaccinated.

- **First Vaccines:**
  - Barton Elementary School APR
    - July 28, 2021, 4-6pm (J&J for over 18, Pfizer for 12-17)
  - Beck Middle School Cafeteria
    - July 29, 2021, 4-6pm (J&J for over 18, Pfizer for 12-17)

- **Second Vaccines:**
  - Barton Elementary School APR
    - August 18, 2021 4-6pm (Pfizer only)
  - Beck Middle School Cafeteria, August 19, 2021, 4-6pm (Pfizer only)

Additional details about registering for the vaccination clinics have been sent directly to families, shared on our website & on our social media pages.

The District will once again host the yearly Rite Aid Vaccination Clinics for all staff members in the fall. In previous years, staff could receive shingles, pneumonia, tetanus and seasonal flu shots. This year they will include COVID-19 shots.
WE Return to Learn - The Road Forward 2021-2022

Formal presentations are scheduled for the Board of Education Meetings on:

- July 27, 2021 - Draft of the updated Continuity of Learning/The Road Forward Plan
- August 10, 2021
- August 24, 2021
- September 14, 2021

The Safe Return Plan is posted on the school district website which is ADA compliant and accessible. The translation feature of the page allows for the information to be translated into many different languages. If there is a specific language need beyond what is currently available, translation services will be provided upon request.
Questions
Feedback
Discussion