



Malberg Administration Building
45 Ranoldo Terrace, P.O. Box 5015
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(856) 429-5600

July 15, 2020

Dear Parents,

I am writing to update you on our reopening plans for September. Last evening, Tuesday, July 14, I presented to the Board of Education an overview of the draft plan to reopen the Cherry Hill Public Schools. With our top priority being the safety of our students and staff, our planning process is ongoing. Our Return to Work Committee and our Return to School Committee are continuing to formulate a detailed framework for the school year, which begins on September 8. We are also incorporating guidance from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), both trusted resources we often turn to in decision making for health-related issues. As many of you know, the New Jersey Department of Education released "[The Road Back](#)," guidance for the reopening of schools, on June 26. We are using "[The Road Back](#)" to help guide our plan for reopening.

Our plan is not final. Every day, we can see that the COVID-19 situation nationwide is continually developing, and these conditions may affect our plans. **Like my presentation to the Board on July 14, this letter is not a complete plan. I am sharing with you what we know today and what you may want to consider as you plan for September.** We will release additional, more detailed information prior to the Governor's deadline of early August. We will release our final plan by August 8.

WHAT WE KNOW

1. The health and safety of our students and staff is our first priority.
2. Our students and staff are the most important part of who we are as a community.
3. The Governor has asked schools to develop a reopening plan that includes modified, in-person instruction. We are developing such a plan while accounting for our families who indicate they are not comfortable sending their children back to school at this time.
4. Some of our families want in-person instruction five full days per week while others do not want their children to return to our school buildings at all. The sentiment surrounding restarting school is as diverse as our community. There is no single plan that will make everyone happy. We also are aware that guidance from the medical community itself (CDC vs. AAP) is not always in agreement and has changed as more information has become available.



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5. COVID-19 policies and decisions are intended to MITIGATE, BUT NOT ELIMINATE risk. From the AAP, “No single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk associated with the virus that causes COVID-19, but implementation of several coordinated interventions can greatly reduce that risk.” We intend to implement those coordinated interventions to help keep your children and our staff safe.

6. Just as there are risks associated with sending students back to school buildings in September, there are also risks with maintaining a 100% remote learning environment for all students. Students rely on schools for academic and social development, as well as food security, physical activity, and safety. We will balance those needs as we continue to develop our plan.

7. September 2020 in schools will look nothing like September 2019. Our Return to School Committee and Return to Work Committee have been meeting since May to formulate recommendations for a comprehensive plan for our return, adjusting and enhancing the plan as new guidance and data are released. At the heart of the plan is the goal that our students will be in school as much as possible while preserving their and our entire staff’s safety. In addition, our [ThoughtExchange online community conversations](#) – one sent to staff and one sent to parents and returning high school students – indicate a strong desire to have some sort of in-person learning taking place this fall.

WHAT WE ARE PLANNING

In order to provide you with as much time as possible to make arrangements and prepare for the coming year, I want to share with you some key points of our reopening plans. **Please understand that these key points do not represent the entire plan. There will be a much more detailed plan released by August 8.**

Our Hybrid Plan for return includes:

1. The choice of a full remote learning option for children, with 100% virtual instruction.
2. A hybrid schedule, combining in school learning and remote learning experiences, will be developed at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
 - Students will be assigned to a cohort, so that only half of the students will physically be in the school at a time.
 - Elementary – students will attend class in school 2 days per week and will engage in remote learning options 3 days per week.
 - Middle – students will attend class in school 2 days per week and will engage in remote learning options 3 days per week.
 - High School – students will attend class in school 2 days per week and will engage in remote learning options 3 days per week.



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3. A regular schedule for students attending the Barclay Early Childhood Center, providing programming only for students who qualify as preschool disabled. Typically developing students will not be admitted to this year's Barclay program.
4. Programming for Special Education based on each child's IEP. Students in special classes will attend school in person regardless of school assignment or building based schedule. This includes:
 - Behavioral and emotional support
 - Learning and Language Disabled
 - Autistic Support
 - Multiply Disabled
 - Alternative High School
5. Livestreaming of the teaching taking place in the classroom so that students who remain on virtual instruction may follow along with the class from home.
6. Lunch served in school in a socially distanced format, with an expanded grab-n-go menu.
7. School Age Child Care (SACC) both before and after school, for the days children are attending school in person. Registration will begin Thursday, July 16, 2020. Details about the registration process are available on our District website, www.chclc.org

We recognize that a modified schedule is a hardship for some families. However, because of the size of our buildings, instructional spaces and hallways, it will be impossible to have a full cohort of students in our buildings at the same time while maintaining safe social distancing.

Our schools operate with a wide range of classroom settings, including science labs, small group instruction spaces, and classrooms of various square footage based on age of buildings, and so forth. We will strive to create 6 feet of physical distancing whenever possible, but we will require face coverings/masks for all students, including when they must leave their seats in the classroom and walk in the hallways and other areas. Again, accommodations will be made for students with certain medical or other conditions, as identified and verified in writing by a treating physician, which preclude the use of face coverings. We also are planning additional physical spacing measures in classrooms, hallways, and other areas. Finally, we will create additional time during the day to allow for handwashing, mask "breaks," snack, and physical movement.



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Enhanced cleaning, sanitizing, and hygiene protocols will be in place in all of our schools. Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms and in high traffic common areas. We will routinely clean high touchpoint areas while taking steps to minimize contact with those areas in the first place. Finally, electrostatic misting sprayers will be used to sanitize our schools every evening. Transportation is a challenge for a variety of reasons. All students who ride a bus will be required to wear a face covering/mask from the time they are at the bus stop through the duration of their ride to and from school. Please consider whether or not your child will ride a bus to and from school, or if you will secure alternate transportation.

We will develop a policy and communicate it to you by August 8 regarding health screenings for students on a daily basis. We will require that any child exhibiting symptoms of illness remain home from school. Those children may tap into the livestream of the classroom if they are well enough to do so. Please have a working thermometer at home to take your child's temperature.

The WE Return to Learn Plan must still gain approval from the Camden County Executive Superintendent's Office. The Board of Education and I have chosen to share with you some of what the plan entails so that you have time this summer to begin to prepare. It is also possible that the proposed WE Return to Learn Plan might not be feasible if the health conditions in our community change between now and the end of August.

If, based upon community health and directives from the State of New Jersey, the WE Return to Learn Plan cannot take place in September, the District will implement full virtual at-home instruction that follows a schedule and structure similar to the above plans. The full virtual instruction plan will include live interaction online between our students and teachers every day.

Our ultimate goal is a full, normal return to school. We will move to this goal when the health conditions in the community indicate it is safe for our students and staff to all be together and we receive all necessary approvals to do so.

All plans will depend upon input, guidance, and direction from the New Jersey and Camden County Departments of Health.

WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO NOW

1. Please begin working on mask or face covering "endurance" with your children by getting reusable/washable face coverings that your child is comfortable wearing and gradually building up the amount of time they can tolerate wearing them. Face shields may be appropriate for those students who have a medical condition or disability that will not allow them to wear a mask. We continue to seek clarification on when a face shield is



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and is not sufficient. Families should begin identifying the most comfortable face mask options for their children and practice wearing masks so your children get used to them. Please choose a mask that is school appropriate.

2. Next, please ensure that you have a working thermometer in your home, to take your child's temperature. We will communicate additional information in the coming weeks about health and hygiene practices, but these small steps now will help in the fall, regardless of the type of Plan we implement.
3. Please make sure your child has a backpack in which to carry belongings to and from school every day. Students will not be sharing any items such as pencils, art supplies and tissues this year. Supply lists will be sent to parents in the coming weeks. If you need assistance getting a backpack, please contact your child's building principal.

I know that this is a lot to digest. I also understand it can be frustrating that our plans are subject to change. This letter is not meant to be comprehensive – we know this is not all of the information you need, but it is a start. Our full plan will address many other issues and considerations with respect to school routines, instruction and assessment, curricular resources, technology support, health and hygiene practices, and more. Please take time to review [my presentation to the Board of Education, from July 14, 2020](#). Video of the meeting, with the Q&A following the presentation, is available on the [CHPS YouTube channel](#). I will present updates and additional details to the Board at the Action Meeting on July 28, 2020 at 6 pm. The meeting will be live streamed at www.chcl.org/boestream. We will deliver additional information to you by August 8 but believe it is important to provide you with a sense of our direction now. I thank you for your continued flexibility and cooperation as we move forward. I hope that you, and your families, all remain healthy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joseph N. Meloche
Superintendent, Cherry Hill Public Schools