



ROCKAWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MRS. PHYLLIS ALPAUGH
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

July 13, 2020

Dear Rockaway Borough families,

I hope this letter finds you all well and you are enjoying the summer break together.

With the release of the Department of Education's *The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education*, Governor Murphy has directed that all schools will reopen in September. With that said, the Rockaway Borough staff has begun our planning in alignment with the Governor's directives with the hopes of welcoming back students for modified in-person instruction on Tuesday September 8th, 2020.

In order to gain the perspectives of many different community stakeholders, we have formed several committees to help develop our district plan and guide our actions moving forward. The first is our District Reopen School Committee that is composed of over 40 members as well as Pandemic Response Teams in each school that will be responsible to monitor our re-entry practices and procedures. Each team includes a broad representation of Borough staff and residents. While each of these committees has focused on a number of key issues such as wellness, instruction, facilities, operations, governance, and technology, their work has also been driven by some underlying principles that we feel are critical to address for any return to school. They include the following:

- Health and safety of all students, staff and their families
- Integrity and continuity of instruction in order to maximize student learning and achievement
- Equitable and inclusive access for all students
- Social and emotional needs and supports
- Empathy and caring for one another

We will share our plan with the Board of Education at the July 21st meeting and with the broader school community the week of August 3rd. In addition to guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, we are also reviewing recommendations from the CDC, the World Health Organization, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. In addition, we have sought out guidance from our School physician and local health officials.

Although we still have much work to do to finalize our plan for the New Jersey Department of Education, I would like to share with you the basics of our intended Rockaway Borough Plan so you can start to make plans of your own for your particular family. Our current plan is to offer in-person instruction for all students following a hybrid schedule. Students will be divided alphabetically into two cohorts or teams, A & B that will rotate for in-person instruction. This allows for no more than 50% of the school population to be present in our buildings at one time, but more importantly to adhere to required social distancing. While Cohort A is in school, Cohort B will be home online, participating in virtual instruction. This sequence will take place Tuesday through Friday with Monday designated as our flex day. With our current proposed plan, we will also strongly consider the needs of special student populations such as special education and English Language Learners when developing programming for Mondays as well as the rest of the week. In addition, we are committed to work with our families who wish to remain entirely at home with remote learning.

While I understand that any type of hybrid schedule may present hardships for many families, we will continue to monitor conditions and revise our plans whenever possible to bring all students back into the building, but also be

aware that we may have to return to full distance learning as health conditions may warrant. Either way, please know that since we are in the initial phases of planning, there are many more decisions to be made and communicated.

As always, we look forward to working with you but most importantly, doing our best to serve and educate the children of Rockaway Borough. While this September may look very different from those in the past, we will do our best to make it a safe and enriching experience for all.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phyllis Alpaugh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Phyllis Alpaugh
Superintendent