



KEANSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Titans,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well as we move towards September and the start of the new school year. I am writing to update you on our reopening plans. As many of you know, the New Jersey Department of Education released [The Road Back](#) which outlines our return to school in the fall. This publication has settled two issues:

1. Schools in New Jersey will reopen for in-person instruction in the fall. Keansburg Schools will now have their first day of instruction on September 8th. As per Governor Murphy's directive, remote only learning is an option for any student choosing such. This is discussed later in this letter.
2. All students will be required to wear a face covering when physical distancing of 6 feet is not possible (unless prohibited from doing so due to a documented medical condition).

Apart from the above, I want to share with you the **American Academy of Pediatrics** (<https://www.aap.org/>) guidelines for opening schools and ask that you take a look. Among their stated positions regarding the reopening of schools are the following:

1. All Policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.
2. The negative implications and consequences of not having students in school every day must be weighed against the current evidence about how Covid-19 affects school-aged children.
3. Schools should consider a physical distancing standard of 6 feet apart, with face coverings worn when this is not possible.
4. The needs of students receiving Special Education Programming demand the utmost priority and must be weighed alongside any virus mitigation measures.

I have asked our Administrators over the past two months to generate plans for reopening our schools. A larger committee including teachers, nurses, parent representatives, custodial and maintenance staff, Board of Education representation, and other stakeholders continue to meet and develop a sound reopening plan. Our core goal is for all students to be in school as much as possible while preserving the safety of all students and staff in the school environment. In addition, the recent parent survey regarding the currently proposed **Cohort Hybrid Model** indicated that approximately 80% of parents intend to send their children to school in the fall.

The full, approved plan will be shared with you in mid August. However, 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 now our intentions regarding reopening plans. Please note that these are just the basic tenets of these plans and all intended plans will be subject to additional input and approvals from the local Departments of Health and the Department of Education.

Our Plan A, which is our current designated plan, will entail the following:

1. Schools will be open in the fall and all students will have the opportunity to attend school two days a week in person. The Cohorts will be one of the following: **Cohort A** - Monday and Thursday in school for a full day. Tuesday and Friday remote learning from home. **Cohort B** - Tuesday and Friday in school for a full day. Monday and Thursday remote learning from home. **Wednesdays will be remote for ½ day for all students and teachers will have Professional Development in the afternoon.** Parents may opt to have their children remain on virtual instruction. Special Education Programming will be based on each child's IEP and may entail Supplemental and Extended Programming.

We are serving lunch in school. With the cohort model our number of students on site daily will allow us to properly socially distance and utilize our cafeterias and the surrounding areas. We feel when students are attending the Keansburg Schools, their experience should be as authentic as possible.

Schools operate a wide range of classroom settings, including science labs, small group instruction spaces, 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-when this is not possible we will require face coverings for all students. During passing times and when students are forced to be within 6 feet, face**

coverings will be worn. Again, accommodations will be made for students with certain medical or other conditions that preclude the use of face coverings, and we are also in the process of securing face shields for student use. We will also implement additional physical spacing measures in classrooms, hallways, and other spaces. Finally, we will create time during the day to allow for handwashing, mask "breaks," and other appropriate or needed modifications.

Transportation is a challenge for a variety of reasons. All students who ride a bus will be required to wear a face covering. We will seek to maintain as much distance as possible on school buses, but 3-6 feet of space may not be possible on most routes most of the time.

We will develop a Policy and communicate it to you by the end of the month regarding health screenings for students on a daily basis. This will likely involve parents confirming each day that their child is free from fever and other symptoms of illness as well as on site temperature checks. We will require that any child exhibiting symptoms of illness remain home from school.

I reiterate that Plan A must still gain approval from other authorities, but the Board of Education and I wanted to share with you some of the features as early as possible so that you have time to prepare. It is also possible that Plan A might not be feasible if the health conditions in our community change between now and the end of August.

If Plan A is not possible, then we will move to Plan B. Plan B will be similar in structure to Plan A. Plan B would require early dismissal for all five days to allow teachers to instruct students that are learning remotely. When students are not in school, they will be expected to engage in remote instruction. While this will make more physical distancing possible, it will also be more disruptive to student learning and working parents. In this scenario, certain classifications of Special Education Programming will likely remain in-person four days a week, consistent with Plan A.

Plan C is full virtual instruction for everyone, but will follow a schedule and structure similar to the above plans with live interaction between students and teachers every day.

All plans will depend upon input, guidance, and direction from New Jersey Officials and local Departments of Health.

To prepare for this coming year, there are a few actions you can take now. First, while we understand some of the hardships involved in anything less than a 100% return to

school, we ask that you begin to make arrangements to help us bring students to school with safeguards and virus mitigation strategies in place. We ask that you please begin to work on face covering endurance with your children. Please find reusable/washable face coverings that your child is comfortable wearing and gradually build up the amount of time they can tolerate wearing them. Next, please ensure that you have a working thermometer in your home. We will communicate additional information about health and hygiene practices at the end of the month, but these small steps now will help in the fall, regardless of the type of plan we implement

I know that this is a lot to digest and may be subject to change. This note is not meant to be comprehensive. 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. At this time we require any family requesting the remote only instruction model to complete the embedded electronic form indicating such: <https://forms.gle/TWSmnWb3R58w7dwZA>. The Request for Remote Instruction Form will also be emailed to all district students' primary contact email accounts as well as available on the district website. This form must be completed by Wednesday, August 5th. If a request for this remote only option is not received by this date, we cannot guarantee the option will be readily available at the onset of school, as planning for such programming is required. We will deliver all information to you by mid-August, but wanted to provide you with a sense of our direction. Additionally, the district will be holding a question and answer session remotely for the community at 6:00 pm on August 11th. A link to access this will be shared on facebook and the district website. If you are interested in submitting a question email cformica@keansburg.k12.nj.us

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Doug Covert