



## HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*"A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE"*

*From the Office of the Superintendent*

**The Holmdel School District is Ready to Welcome our Students and Staff**

**September 12, 2020**

Over the past 90 plus days, the Holmdel School District has spent countless hours preparing our schools, both from a facility and instructional standpoint, to be ready to open on September 14, 2020, as planned. We are beyond pleased with the progress that has been made in such a short period of time to transform our buildings to provide our students and staff with a safe learning environment. The support of our community has never been as important as it is now.

In the area of facilities, due to the Board's commitment to fiscal responsibility and long-term financial planning, the Holmdel School District made significant enhancements to improve our infrastructure and cleaning protocols so that our school can serve as a model for all school districts as to how to continue to operate during a pandemic, like we must now. Those investments are listed here [Mitigating Risk, Health and Safety Update](#). These improvements will prepare us beyond the COVID pandemic and were further complemented by all the improvements made to Holmdel High School and Satz Middle School for the Holmdel 2020 projects, which are on schedule and within budget.

We are pleased to report that our schools have been toured by the Board of Education, representatives of the Holmdel Education Association and the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), and everyone has been impressed by what the Holmdel School District has been able to accomplish in such a short period of time. All have deemed the enhancements made to the schools exceed all expectations and provide a model for which all school districts should aspire.

Fortunately, the District staff, teachers and administrators learned a great deal this past spring about teaching virtually and are applying this new found experience and knowledge to our new hybrid and virtual programs that will be offered to students this fall. The hybrid program is designed so our teachers and administrators have time each day to work with students virtually outside the four hour student day, have time for office hours, and have the opportunity to collaborate with each other to develop new instructional activities and strategies that will be more effective in the hybrid than the traditional strategies they were forced to use last spring when the teachers, with almost no notice, were forced to go to a full virtual model. For more information about those programs, please visit this link [Hybrid Instructional Model, Virtual Model \(VPO\), Question & Answer 9.12.20 , Pre K Hybrid Model, Hybrid Calendars](#) or visit the District or each school's website where they are posted.



## HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*"A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE"*

*From the Office of the Superintendent*

To help our teachers as they prepare for this new normal, the District provided two full days of professional development prior to the opening of school and had a wonderful, nationally recognized speaker provide additional training on working with students to address their social and emotional needs which, as we know, have been hit hard by the isolation resulting from the COVID 19 lockdown. A critical element of our professional development program was the training of our staff on Corvid 19 and the procedures we have put in place to ensure a healthy, safe environment [Covid 19 Training](#).

This pandemic has caused a shortage of teachers throughout the State. Many school districts were required to open remotely because of this shortage. Fortunately, Holmdel is not in that position because we have had a limited number of teachers who, for a variety of documented reasons, cannot return to the classroom during this pandemic. In these situations, our first priority was to find highly qualified teachers to fill these positions, but it has been difficult due to the overall shortage of teachers. To address those vacancies, we have secured additional teachers and continue to search for others. We were unable to secure enough teachers to cover these vacated positions, forcing the District to seek other solutions for the 21 vacant positions to maintain the integrity of our instructional program.

We are fortunate to have some of our exceptional teachers return from pre-planned maternity leaves to provide remote instruction to students while having a teacher or substitute in the classroom. This was not ideal, but the only additional viable solution to address the few vacancies we have in the District so that students in these classrooms will benefit from the expertise and experience of our teachers virtually as well as from an in class teacher supporting them and the virtual students. While some have questioned this model, the reality is that if we didn't implement this option, we would have had to resort to a remote option only for all our students, which is not optimal. As we stated many times, our plan is always evolving and we hope to have all of our teachers back in the classroom as soon as possible. Until then we believe that this model provides our students with an excellent classroom experience and we will continue to search for qualified teachers to address these vacancies.

The District is also looking forward to getting closer to business as usual as the year goes on. We will be prepared to expand the school day as soon as we believe it is safe to do so. We are prepared to address any positive COVID 19 issues going forward, including if the State would require us to move to all remote. Until that time, the priority of the District is to remain as flexible as possible as we embark upon this new mode of learning.



## HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*"A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE"*

*From the Office of the Superintendent*

Many of you will have questions throughout as we move forward. There has never been a time before where open communication has been as important as now. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teachers and building principal (however, if you have questions about transportation, please contact the Transportation Department at [lcarducci@holmdelschools.org](mailto:lcarducci@holmdelschools.org)). They will make sure that your question is promptly answered or directed to the right person.

These are unique times that require a great deal of patience and perseverance. Please be assured that a tremendous amount of effort and time has been dedicated towards building a solid foundation to allow Holmdel students succeed in the upcoming school year. We look forward to a successful opening and will continue to communicate with you in the upcoming days and weeks.