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September 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Happy New School Year! On behalf of the Berlin Township Board of Education, faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you to the Berlin Township School District and the 2022–2023 school year. As the Superintendent of Schools, I am excited as the new school year begins. Each year brings the anticipation of discovering new areas of interest and working to master old skills. I look forward to working with everyone in the Berlin Township School family in order to continue providing an educational experience reflecting high academic standards and expectations for all students.

In preparation for the 2022-2023 school year, the principals, administrators, central office staff, secretaries, and building and grounds staff have been busy the entire summer. They have been cleaning and refurbishing each building, upgrading technology, ordering supplies, revising curricula, and reviewing all the necessary student related paperwork. The teachers are ready to provide an exciting and challenging academic experience for all students, supported by the administration and Board of Education. JFK is excited to have the 4<sup>th</sup> grade at their school and DDE expands to include more specialized classrooms to better meet the needs of our students.

Student and staff health and safety continue to be a high priority due to the continuing Pandemic and the spread of other diseases. The district continues to follow the recommendations and guidelines of the CDC, New Jersey and Camden County Departments of Health along with the New Jersey Department of Education, and the relevant Executive Orders issued by Governor Murphy.

As we begin the 2022-2023 school year the district will follow the guidelines below:

- Parents/guardians are asked to screen their child for any symptoms of illness, especially COVID-19, each morning before school and not send any child who has an illness to school.
- Students and staff will continue the Wash-in/Wash-out practice when leaving and entering a room or the building. Hand sanitizer will be used frequently!
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day, with more extensive cleaning and sanitizing done at the end of each day.
- Social distancing is no longer required, however for the general health and safety of all students, students will be spread out to the best of our ability, based on the activity.
- Students who are infected with COVID -19 will need to quarantine for at least 5 days, at this time. Those who have been exposed, while not required to quarantine, may need to wear a mask and test for illness on Day 5. The school nurse will assist parents with the required protocol.
- Contact tracing, while not required, will be done when school personnel are notified that an infected person (staff member or student) has been in the building and in contact with others. The nurses, building principals and teachers will work together to determine who was in close contact with the infected person. Quarantine and isolation timelines have been relaxed by the CDC, however, we want to make sure that parents are aware of potential illness.
- Exclusion criteria for persons with COVID – 19 and compatible symptoms is based on testing results and the presence of symptoms, as per CDC guidelines.
- The TEST to STAY protocol has been dropped by the CDC. However, if students are exposed, the district has a limited number of at-home tests from the NJ Dept. of Health that will be available for students. Please contact the school nurse for additional information.

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The daily guidelines listed above are mostly the same as they were at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. As additional guidelines are released by the CDC, and NJ Dept. of Health, the school district will notify parents and guardians.

Visitors for in school activities and field trips will be considered on a case by case basis. Co-curricular activities will take place this fall, as we are able to implement them within the changing status of the Pandemic. Large group indoor events, such as Back to School Nights, will be held in person with some alterations and with a virtual component. Smaller group events may be held in person, based on the number of anticipated attendees and the current COVID -19 risk level in our community.

In addition to health related safety, the district is committed to the physical safety of our students and staff while they are on campus. The Board of Education has renewed the agreement with Berlin Township for the services of School Security Officers for the 2022-2023 school year. We anticipate that there will be one officer at each school daily and one present for most of our after school events. Welcome Back Officer Wilson and Officer Annacone. As soon as we have the name of the new additional officer, we will introduce her/him to the community.

As the District motto states, ***“Educating today for tomorrow’s success,”*** our goal is to ensure that every child has a quality educational experience in order to be successful and thrive in their future endeavors. By working and communicating as a team, we will be able to meet this goal for each child in the Berlin Township School District. Once again, I look forward to working with you and your children this year. Welcome back and have a great school year! Stay safe and healthy!

Sincerely,

*Edythe B. Austermuhl, Ed. D.*

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Superintendent

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