MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dennis M. Fare
Assistant Superintendent

Michael DeTuro, Ed.D.
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Kyle J. Bleeker
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

April 9, 2021

As of April 5, 2021, the CDC and NJDOH continue to recommend a 14-day quarantine period for persons who might have been exposed to COVID-19 or named as a close contact.

Please note: Regardless of your vaccination status or previously-positive status, our school district will always notify you if you are identified as a close contact.

Status	Exposure	Outcome
Fully vaccinated*	Close contact	Remaining asymptomatic no quarantine is required. If symptoms develop isolate and seek medical evaluation and testing
Previously positive (clinically recovered) within past three months**	Close contact	Quarantine not required
Previously positive greater than past three months	Close contact	14 day quarantine required
Unvaccinated or not previously positive	Close contact	14 day quarantine required

In all cases, it is essential to monitor yourself for symptoms. Do not attend school if you are unable to answer the attestation form and meet that criteria.

We reserve the right to adjust this guidance based on individual or cohort circumstances, inclusive of information gathered related to COVID-19 regional transmission risk levels.

Proof required:

*Proof of vaccination card provided to your school nurse. “Fully vaccinated” means confirmation of first and only for Johnson and Johnson, or both doses administered for Pfizer and Moderna and the date on which you are fully vaccinated. Two weeks post the last administered dose deems a staff member fully vaccinated.

** Previously positive must document:

Name of patient, date of test, physician or location of testing, and clearly denote a positive test.
Rapid tests will only be accepted to denote a positive test.

Mahwah Administrative Team

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April 23, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

Our system of connecting with you continues to grow and remains paramount to our success throughout this school year. Keeping our community informed of our next steps takes place in various ways, from a classroom communication, building-based newsletters from our building principals, central office reporting, or through information shared at a Board of Education meeting.

At our most recent Board of Education meeting, on Wednesday. April 21, 2021, Mr. Fare and Dr. DeTuro provided an update regarding Phase II and the ongoing pre-planning for Phase III, summer enrichment, and Phase IV, our reopening for the 2021-2022 school year. For those of you unable to attend the meeting either virtually or in-person, we wanted to summarize the key points of this presentation. As you review our highlights, please contact your building teams with any questions.

Phase II Reflections

- More on-site learning has been positive for students and our instructional program.
    - Our fully-remote students joined our in-school learning program.
- Snack at the elementary school level has been a success.
    - Reasonable snack opportunities at the secondary level is a current consideration.
- Evaluation of our student learning and proficiency continues to be a district-wide priority.
- Continued revision of New Jersey Department of Health guidance on quarantine, travel advisory, and close contacts.

Phase III Considerations - (We are hopeful that this takes place prior to the end of the school year.)

- We recognized the benefits academically and socially to a full instructional day for students.
    - Full-day of instruction requires a close look at lunch:
        - Review possible modifications to school schedule.
        - Review of transportation adjustments that would need to be made.
        - Consult with our food services.
        - Conduct site visits to local school districts currently offering lunch.
        - Engage guidance through our partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health for on-site review of our plans.
- Reasonable snack opportunities at the secondary level is a current consideration.

A Look at Upcoming End-of-Year Activities

- Review students' rites of passage.
    - Moving-up and promotion ceremonies.
    - Building visits and orientations for bridge-year students (current third graders visiting Joyce Kilmer School, current fifth graders visiting Ramapo Ridge Middle school, and current eighth graders visiting Mahwah High School)
- Invite all students to typical school close-out experiences.
- Find ways to involve our full-remote students on school campus.

Summer Programming - Tentative

- Offer our standard booster summer school program for identified students.
- Offer bootcamp opportunities for students, by subscription.
- Offer enrichment opportunities for students, by subscription.

The next few weeks will be critical for our school community. It is important that we remain steadfast in our work collectively to be just as thoughtful as we have been in our reopening of our schools in September and in our most recent transition to Phase II. Phase III must be similarly planned, so that careful considerations can be put into place for building-level practices and protocol.

We again thank our school staff and our community members in our combined efforts. It is through our partnerships where we have found most success in this district, and we must continue in this work together.

Our administrative team will continue to keep you updated on our planning as we journey through our remaining weeks of the school year.

Respectfully,

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August 20, 2020

Dear Mahwah Community,

Most recently, our communication has focused on process and procedures for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. We felt – now – that it was time to reflect with you on a recent announcement related to schools by Governor Murphy.

On June 26, 2020, school districts were charged with the task of creating reopening plans that mandated no option other than in-person instruction. Subsequently, on July 17, 2020, school districts were also required to provide full-remote learning plans as an alternative to on-site learning. As late as August 13, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order 175 that permitted institutions to open for on-site learning, even though the state has yet to move on to Stage 3 of New Jersey's state-wide safety guidelines, where restrictions are lifted towards New Jersey's "new normal." Within Executive Order 175 is also the option for school districts to withdraw their originally-mandated in-person reopening plans and to seek permission for all students to participate in a full-time virtual reopening in September. This order stipulates that our school district is obligated to meet the requirements aligned to the New Jersey Department of Education Reopening of School Checklist, that which our Reopening Taskforce used to guide our decision-making related to our re-entry plan and ultimate recommendations to the Board of Education.

Using insight and recommendations from a range of stakeholders, we presented to you a comprehensive re-entry plan for our school district. This plan was developed using the guidance available to us at the time from the New Jersey Department of Education. We believed in our plan, and we continue to believe that our plan is best designed for our community – of students and teachers. As we originally shared with you at our August 5, 2020 Board of Education meeting presentation, we still believe that our reopening plans meet the criteria listed in the state's reopening checklist; the New Jersey Department of Education has yet to express otherwise.

Our district reopening teams created plans and presented those plans to you, our community. You have subsequently made life plans built upon the learning options that you have selected for your child (in-person hybrid or full-remote program) for the 2020-2021 school year. We know the restructuring of your life, employment, and childcare all rely upon the plans we shared with you earlier this month.

We are continuing with our plans to open using the models (in-person hybrid learning or full-remote instruction) we have already shared with you; however, the next few weeks are crucial in order to maintain our existing plans:

- The local health data, which we are monitoring, will have to maintain wellness.
- The remaining and outstanding facilities and technology items on delayed shipment will need to arrive, as they are expected in-district in the coming days.
- The outside transportation vendors having an unanticipated inability to meet the state-wide demand.
- The New Jersey Department of Education requiring unanticipated and additional criteria before the start of our schools' reopening.

We have learned, over time, that we can mitigate risk through our behaviors, and are not able to – and have never been able to – eliminate total risk. Our caution around health and safety exists to keep us vigilant. We cannot allow this caution, coupled with the ever-changing mandates from the Department of Education, to betray our optimism for a hopeful and successful start to the 2020-2021 school year.

As expressed to you at the onset of this public health-related crisis in March: We will continue to keep you informed of any changes. Thank you for staying committed to the course with us.

Sincerely,

Mahwah Administrative Team

From **December 21st & 22nd** and **Jan 4th—15th**

There will be 2 ways to get lunch!

You can pick up a meal at 3 convenient locations based on where you live in the district!

Betsy Ross (front entrance)
from 8:00am—9:00am

George Washington (front entrance)
from 8:00am—9:00am

High School (auditorium entrance)
from 7:15am—8:45am & 2:00pm—3:00pm

Call or Email for Delivery

Call 201-762-2338

or email foodservices@mahwah.k12.nj.us

Leave your child's name, ID #, grade, school & address.

Orders MUST BE in by 12:00PM the previous day,

and by 12:00PM on Friday for Monday orders.

Meals will be delivered in the morning.
Drivers will place the meal on the door step
and ring the bell, there is no contact.

STAY SAFE THUNDERBIRDS!!

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November 16, 2020

Good afternoon, Mahwah Families:

Fatigue has set in for all of us in a variety of ways. Maybe you let your guard down and did not wear your mask when you should have. Maybe you said yes to a face-to-face play date instead of insisting on a virtual get-together. Or maybe you have planned a gathering for the holidays that expands your circle.

The United States is experiencing a rapid spread of the virus with increased hospitalizations. New Jersey is at a crucial crossroad that can result in a significant spread or we can continue to do our part to keep the positivity rates low by returning to our own self-induced lockdown before we are mandated to do so.

In our schools, we are proud of the fact that our COVID positive cases are isolated and have yet to cause additional cases or an outbreak. However, our data is also showing us that more staff and students are having contact **outside of school** and are being required to quarantine for being labeled a close contact. The number of those requiring a test or being asked to quarantine is rising. Currently, in every school, we have staff and students who are in a mandated quarantine and this was NOT our reality two weeks ago.

On Monday, November 16, 2020, Governor Murphy reduced the capacity of indoor gatherings to 10 people, down from 25, and the outdoor capacity will be lowered to 150 from 500. This change will impact spectators at school-sponsored sporting events and we wait to hear if it will impact attendance at Board of Education meetings.

The district administration will continue to review our local data, along with township, county, and state data, as we continue to collaborate with our medical experts to determine our course of actions.

Please do your part and commit to:

- Completing your daily attestation forms.
- Keeping your child home when he/she is unwell.
- Contacting your school nurse when you or your child is required to quarantine.
- When traveling, follow quarantine guidance.
- Washing your hands.
- Maintaining social distance.
- Wearing a mask.

Sincerely,

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Good afternoon, Mahwah,

The Virtual Wednesday, as planned, is taking place on alternating weeks, and will continue through the month of January.

Thus far, Virtual Wednesdays serve as opportunities for in-school deep cleaning, as a provided break in calculating potential exposure as part of our contact tracing process, and as an opportunity for teachers to conduct advanced planning, to collaborate, to further explore instructional technology, and to pre-teach our students what a return to full-remote instruction could look like.

While it has all of this value, the reality is that our current data does not demonstrate improvement towards wellness, which is why – in our re-evaluation of Virtual Wednesdays – they will continue in these upcoming weeks.

To assist you with advanced planning, we would like to share the dates for the future Virtual Wednesdays through the month of January.

- December 9, 2020
- December 23, 2020
- January 13, 2020
- January 27, 2020

Building-based details about Virtual Wednesdays will continue to be provided to your classroom teachers and building administration.

Sincerely,

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

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December 2, 2020

Dear Mahwah Families,

The COVID-19 activity level has a significant impact on our ability to keep schools open. It does so in several ways, first and foremost, as soon as our county reaches the "red" (very high risk) level of infection rate, we have been advised that the district is required to transition to a fully remote program for all students. Secondly, as the activity level increases, so does the likelihood that more students and staff will be identified as case positive or a close contact and further make the case for the need to move to a fully remote program.

We are not yet noted to be in the "red" but are preparing to transition into a fully remote model - if and when the need arises. The preparation consists of scheduling, content covered, and programs provided. Additionally, when needed, a decision made regarding our ability to provide any on-site instruction for a very specialized population will be shared with those families. If alternative schedules are created, they will be communicated to you by school representatives, by either your teachers or administrators.

Similar to the springtime closing, when we are in a fully remote program, we will continue to offer lunch for our students using a phone-in and delivery/pickup system.

Please take time now to identify what changes or additions you need to make to ensure that your child/children are safely supervised during the instructional day.

Please review your available technology access and be sure that your child will be able to partake in learning using the on-line format.

We are committed to advising you as soon as possible when we are closing.

Please continue to follow all health-related guidance that we have shared:

- Stay home if unwell.
- Stay home if family members or sibling prevent with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Wear a mask.
- Wash your hands.
- Keep a safe social distance .
- Contact your school nurse regarding any health-related matters.

Sincerely,

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our school nurses are always working diligently to keep our schools safe from illness and our students healthy. Nurses serve as our frontline workers dedicated to assisting you with any health-related questions or matters that you may have, especially regarding this current health crisis.

Based upon feedback from your questions, below are clarifying answers related to the most recent guidance sent to you on November 24, 2020:

- If anyone in your household is awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test for any reason, then student(s) in that household may not attend school until the results are received.
- If your child is not feeling well, you must fill out the attestation form and answer "Yes" where appropriate, as a matter of tracking and data collection for our district.
- PCR test results are the only acceptable testing that can be used to return to school after being absent or excluded due to COVID-19 symptoms (rapid tests will not be accepted)

  or

  - Return after being absent due to COVID-19 symptoms can happen after isolating for at least 10 days since first symptoms began and 24-hour fever-free without fever-reducing medication and improved symptoms.
- Close contacts must remain out of school for the mandated 14 days and should he/she develop symptoms at anytime during the 14 days the calendar date for exclusion from school will also change.

The district HAS NOT been advised of any formal changes to New Jersey's quarantine criteria; therefore, if a student tests positive or is deemed a close contact, he/she must be out of school for 14 days and may only return after that time, while also being free of fever and having improved symptoms.

The nurses' efforts to keep our schools healthy **deserve to be met with complete cooperation, compliance, and respect**. We insist that you refrain from any unnecessary confrontations when speaking with them. Further, the directives issued by our nurses reflects the guidance that must be adhered to in order to keep our schools safe.

As we have expressed along the way, we thank you again for your continued support. We have been in this together; we are in this together; and we must continue to remain in this together.

Sincerely,

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December 4, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we prepare for the winter that lies ahead, we wanted to provide you with the procedure we utilize regarding inclement weather.

Ensuring that our students and staff can travel to and from school safely is one of our primary concerns, especially during challenging winter months.

The decision to make a weather-related closing of schools is a result of a deliberate and thoughtful process that we have successfully used in previous years.

Anytime inclement weather is forecasted, we regularly monitor detailed updates from several official weather sources. The following resources are also consulted, and a series of deliberate actions guide our decision-making process.

As early as the night before an anticipated weather event – and always by 4:00 a.m. – the following resources are consulted:

- Mahwah Police Department
- Mahwah Department of Public Works
- Our district Buildings and Grounds Director
- Central Office administrators
- Superintendents in neighboring school districts (though Mahwah's unique topography and road conditions sometimes require our weather-related decisions to differ from theirs)

Because of the volume of students that we transport via bus, combined with the Mahwah High School start time, we must make our final decision by 5:00 a.m.

We support parents' decisions with regards to their children's safe travel to school. If parents are not comfortable driving in wintry weather or do not want their child to ride the school bus, they may certainly elect to not attend school on that day.

As currently designed, our hybrid and fully remote school day is not able to accommodate delayed openings.

Each predicted weather event is unique, with variables that present new challenges - even for the most experienced meteorologists. We will continue to use our resources and reflect on each situation with safety in mind.

Sincerely,

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Estimadas familias de Mahwah,

No abordamos esta tarea a la ligera...

Todos creemos que los más de 60 días que hemos podido brindar instrucción en persona (on-site) han sido un regalo. Este regalo tiene sus raíces en nuestra creencia de que la experiencia física es la mejor manera de brindar a nuestros estudiantes el más alto nivel de instrucción. Sin embargo, ha llegado el momento de aceptar que, basado los datos de nuestro distrito y un empujón para mantener a las familias bien antes de nuestras vacaciones, el distrito ha tomado la decisión de conducir la instrucción educativa totalmente de manera remota a partir del **lunes 21 de diciembre de 2020** y reabrirán los edificios **el martes 19 de enero de 2021**.

Las escuelas públicas de Mahwah llevarán a cabo la instrucción de todos los estudiantes de forma totalmente remota comenzando el lunes 21 de diciembre de 2020. Nuestro programa híbrido se reanudará el martes 19 de enero de 2021.

Hemos determinado, con el apoyo del Comité Ejecutivo de la Junta de Educación, la Junta de Salud de Mahwah, nuestro representante de HARP (Programa Regional de Concienciación sobre la Salud) y el médico del distrito que tenemos la oportunidad de tomar una respuesta proactiva para la salud y seguridad de nuestro personal y los estudiantes que van a las vacaciones y al regresar de esas vacaciones. En última instancia, este descanso de la escuela permitirá la oportunidad para que el personal y las familias ingresen a nuestro recreo de vacaciones libres de exposición potencial y regresen en enero de la misma manera.

Desde el regreso de las vacaciones de Acción de Gracias y debido a los cambios en los requisitos de los CDC, hay muchos estudiantes y miembros del personal identificados como contactos cercanos, expuestos a COVID-19, esperando los resultados de las pruebas para ellos mismos o los miembros de su familia, o exhibiendo dos o más síntomas. La variedad de problemas de contacto cercano y positividad que hemos encontrado nos obliga a alentar a todas nuestras familias y personal a usar el tiempo adicional físicamente lejos de nuestros edificios escolares para practicar verdaderamente el distanciamiento social y el aislamiento para que nuestro regreso esté menos cargado de posibles exposiciones. y casos positivos. Y lo que es más importante, usar nuestro tiempo fuera del modelo híbrido para desestresarnos, enfocarnos únicamente en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje, y reagruparnos para nuestro regreso en 2021.

Abrimos nuestras puertas en septiembre con precaución en torno a la salud y la seguridad que debía mantenernos alerta, *y así fue*. No permitimos que esta precaución traicionara nuestro optimismo; encontramos maneras de ofrecer aprendizaje estudiantil en persona mitigando los riesgos, al tiempo que abordamos las preocupaciones de las partes interesadas. Esta pausa temporal en nuestra programación en persona no descarrilará nuestros planes para el resto de este año escolar.
Como hicimos con el cierre de la primavera de 2020 y continuamos con la reapertura de septiembre, recientemente nos reunimos con todas las cohortes para garantizar una transición sin problemas a nuestro programa completamente remoto para todos los estudiantes. Si bien regresamos a este modelo fuera del sitio, lo hacemos sabiendo que nuestros maestros y estudiantes están mejor equipados para manejar los desafíos y, lo que es más importante, que *volveremos* al aprendizaje en persona.

Los estudiantes que actualmente reciben instrucción completamente remota permanecerán en sus clases virtuales actuales/programa existente. La información específica de los horarios escolares individuales para nuestros estudiantes híbridos será compartida por cada edificio escolar.

Es importante para nosotros que nuestros estudiantes puedan acceder a la tecnología de tal manera que no haya interrupciones en su experiencia educativa. Como les comunicamos la primavera pasada, nuestro departamento de tecnología apoyará a nuestros estudiantes y personal a través de este programa remoto. Si su hijo posee un dispositivo emitido por el distrito y tiene problemas con este dispositivo, consulte la información a continuación para acceder a los apoyos que tenemos.

Información tecnológica:

Nuestro departamento de tecnología se compromete a apoyar a todo el personal y a los estudiantes durante el período de instrucción virtual. En caso de que tenga dificultades técnicas, hay varias opciones para recibir ayuda técnica:

- **Envíe su problema técnico por correo electrónico a mahwahtech@mahwah.k12.nj.us**
    - Asegúrese de incluir su nombre, tipo de usuario (personal / estudiante) y una descripción específica del problema.
    - Si cor responde, incluya capturas de pantalla de cualquier problema o error que aparezca
    - Indique el tipo de dispositivo que está utilizando. Si es un dispositivo emitido por la escuela, incluya la identificación de la etiqueta de activo y el nombre de la computadora que aparecen en la portada de la computadora portátil.

- **Programe una cita con un técnico para la entrega del dispositivo**
    - Los técnicos estarán disponibles de lunes a viernes en el edificio T3 ubicado en Mahwah High School. Las horas de ayuda técnica se enumeran a continuación y SOLO CON CITA PREVIA
        - Lunes a viernes de 1:30 pm a 3:30 pm
        - Martes 8:00 am - 9:00 am
        - Jueves 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm
    - Cómo programar una cita
        - Vaya a bit.ly/mtpsappt1 para ver las citas disponibles
            - Debe incluir una descripción del problema, el número de computadora y un número de celular para que el técnico se comunique con usted con preguntas o para confirmar la finalización de la reparación.
        - Recibirá un correo electrónico de confirmación una vez programada la cita.
        - Preséntese en el edificio T3 STEAM en MHS (cubo azul) a la hora programada.
        - Se ubicará un contenedor dentro del vestíbulo de las puertas 1 y 2.
        - Coloque el dispositivo dentro del contenedor.
            - Un técnico se comunicará con usted al número que proporcionó al programar su cita para informarle cuando se complete la reparación.
            - Si la reparación no se puede completar en menos de 30 minutos, se le entregará un dispositivo de préstamo (según disponibilidad).

Antes de ponerse en contacto con el técnico, aquí hay algunos consejos útiles:

Problema: Mi computadora está congelada
Sugerencia: ***Intente reiniciar su computadora***

Problema: Mi computadora portátil no se carga y el cable no está deshilachado.
Sugerencia: ***Intente usar un tomacorriente diferente***

Problema: Mi computadora portátil no se conecta a WiFi

Sugerencia: Asegúrese de haber configurado su computadora portátil para la red WiFi de su hogar.

Problema: No puedo conectarme a una sesión de Zoom
Sugerencia: ***Vaya a mahwah.zoom.us y haga clic en "iniciar sesión". Inicie sesión con su dirección de correo electrónico de Mahwah. Después de iniciar sesión, haga clic en el enlace de Zoom para unirse a la sesión de Zoom.***

Aquí hay algunos recursos adicionales para ayudarlo con su tecnología:

- **Grado K-5: http://bit.ly/mtpstechtipsk5**
- **Grado 6-12: http://bit.ly/mtpstechtips612**

Distribución de alimentos:

Nuestro distrito está comprometido a continuar ofreciendo almuerzos durante el período escolar completamente remoto.

Las escuelas de Mahwah mantendrán comidas a disposición de los estudiantes que las necesiten. A través de exenciones otorgadas por el Departamento de Agricultura de los EE. UU., todas las comidas que se sirven durante el año escolar 2020-2021, ya sea en persona o en forma remota, se ofrecen sin costo alguno para nuestros estudiantes.

Debemos monitorear de cerca y dar cuenta de las comidas que se sirven y, por lo tanto, utilizaremos los siguientes procedimientos para la distribución de comidas.

El almuerzo se proporcionará los días en que los estudiantes reciban instrucción.

Si desea recibir el almuerzo para su(s) estudiante(s), tiene dos opciones, que se encuentran a continuación:

Opción 1: Recogida (no se requiere una llamada anticipada o correo electrónico)

- Las comidas estarán disponibles para ser recogidas en los siguientes lugares y horarios. Esté preparado con el número de identificación de su estudiante cuando llegue.
  - Escuela secundaria Mahwah (entrada al auditorio)
    - 7:15am - 8:45am
    - 2:pm - 3pm
  - Escuelas Betsy Ross y George Washington (entradas principales)
    - 8am - 9am
- Los padres pueden recoger por varios estudiantes en varias escuelas en cualquier lugar

Opción 2 - Entrega (se requiere una llamada anticipada o un correo electrónico)

- La entrega de comidas solo se puede realizer notificando al distrito con anticipación.
- Las comidas **deben solicitarse a más tardar al mediodía (12:00 pm)** del día anterior a la entrega.
  - Las comidas para una entrega el lunes deben solicitarse el viernes.
- Por favor envíe un correo electrónico a foodservices@mahwah.k12.nj.us o llame al 201-762-2338

§ Deberá proporcionar el nombre, número de identificación y dirección de su estudiante
- Las comidas se dejarán en su casa esa mañana; no habrá contacto con el conductor.

La información específica de los horarios escolares individuales para nuestros estudiantes híbridos será compartida por cada edificio escolar. Los estudiantes actuales de instrucción totalmente remota permanecerán en su programa existente.

Continuaremos manteniéndolo informado de nuestros planes de reapertura para nuestro regreso el martes 19 de enero de 2021. Es nuestro plan que volvamos a nuestras escuelas en enero, mientras continuamos manteniendo la salud y la seguridad de nuestros estudiantes y personal una prioridad.

Seguimos comprometidos a mantenernos transparentes y mantenerlo informado de nuestros próximos pasos. Por favor, manténgase conectado con nosotros poniéndose en contacto con su(s) profesor(es), administración de edificios, visitando nuestro sitio web o suministre imágenes de aprendizaje virtual para compartir en Twitter.

Mantenerse conectado con usted es esencial para nosotros y nuestras escuelas. Creemos en esta comunidad, que seremos más fuertes por haber pasado por esto, y seguiremos avanzando a través de esto juntos.

Sinceramente,

Equipo Administrativo de Mahwah

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

Dennis M. Fare
Assistant Superintendent

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Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Kyle J. Bleeker
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

December 11, 2020

Dear Mahwah Families,

We do not approach this task lightly…

The 65 days that we have been able to provide on-site instruction is a gift. This gift is rooted in our experiences that the brick-and-mortar experience is the best way to provide our students with the highest level of instruction. However, the time has come to accept that - based upon our district data trends and a push to keep families well prior to our holiday break - the district will become fully remote, effective **Monday, December 21, 2020,** and will reopen for students **on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.**

Mahwah Public Schools will be placed on fully-remote instruction on Monday, December 21, 2020, for all student populations, and will resume our hybrid program on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

We have determined, with the support of the Executive Committee of the Board of Education, Mahwah Board of Health, our HARP (Health Awareness Regional Program) representative, and the district physician that we have the opportunity to take a proactive response for the health and safety of our staff and students going into the holiday break and upon return from that break. Ultimately this break away from school will allow for the opportunity for staff and families to enter our holiday recess free from potential exposure and return in January in the same manner.

Since the return of the Thanksgiving break and because of the changes in the CDC requirements, there are many students and staff members being identified as close contacts, exposed to COVID-19, awaiting test results for themselves or family members, or exhibiting two or more symptoms. The range of close contact and positivity issues we have encountered compel us to encourage all of our families and staff to use the additional time physically away from our school buildings to truly practice the same procedures that we instilled in our students, including social distancing and isolation, so that our return is less fraught with the potential exposures and positive cases. And importantly so, to use our time away from the hybrid model to de-stress, to focus solely on teaching and learning, and to regroup for our return in 2021.

We opened our doors in September with caution around health and safety that was meant to keep us vigilant - *and it did*. We did not allow this caution to betray our optimism; we found ways to offer in-school learning by mitigating risks, while addressing stakeholders' concerns.

This temporary pause in our on-site programming will not derail our plans for the remainder of this school year.

As we did with the spring 2020 closure, and continued with the September reopening, we recently met with all cohorts to ensure a smooth transition to our fully-remote program for all students. While we return to this off-site model, we do so knowing that our teachers and students are better-equipped to handle the challenges and - more importantly - that we *will* return to on-site learning.

Current fully-remote students will remain in their current virtual classrooms/existing program. Information specific to individual school schedules for our hybrid students will be shared by each school building.

It is important to us that our students are able to access their technology in such a way that there is no lapse in their instructional experience. As we communicated to you last spring, our technology department will continue to support our students and staff through this remote program. If your child possesses a district-supplied device and is having issues with this device, please see the information in the addendum below to access the supports that we have in place.

Information specific to individual school schedules for our hybrid students will be shared by each school building. Current fully-remote students will remain in their existing program.

We will continue to keep you apprised of our reopening plans for our return on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. It is our plan that we return to our schools in January, while continuing to keep the health and safety of our students and staff a top priority.

We remain committed to staying transparent and keeping you informed of our next steps. Please stay connected to us by contacting your teacher(s), building administration, visiting our website, or supplying us with images of virtual learning to share on Twitter.

Staying connected with you is essential to us and our schools. We believe in this community, that we will be stronger from this, and we will continue to move through this together.

Sincerely,

Mahwah Administrative Team

Technology Information:

Our technology department is committed to the continued support of all staff and students during the fully-remote period of instruction.

If you experience any technical difficulties, there are various options to receive technical assistance:

- **E-mail your technology issue to: mahwahtech@mahwah.k12.nj.us**
  - Be sure to include your name, user type (staff/student), and a specific description of the issue.
  - If applicable, include screenshots of any issues or errors that appear.
  - Indicate the type of device that you are using. If a school-issued device, include the asset tag ID and computer name listed on the front cover of the laptop.

- **Schedule an appointment with a technician for device drop-off**
  - Technicians will be available M-F at the T3 building located at Mahwah High School. Technology support hours are listed below and are **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY:**
    - Monday-Friday 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
    - Tuesday 8:00 am - 9:00 am
    - Thursday 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

  - To schedule an appointment:
    - Go to bit.ly/mtpsappt1 to view available appointments.
    - You must include a description of the issue, computer number, and a cell phone number for the technician to contact you with questions or to confirm repair completion.
    - You will receive a confirmation e-mail after the appointment is scheduled.
    - Please report to the T3 STEAM Building at MHS (blue cube) at the scheduled time.
    - A bin will be located inside the vestibule of doors 1 & 2.
    - Place device inside the bin.
    - A technician will contact you at the number you provided when scheduling your appointment to inform you when the repair is completed.

- If the repair cannot be completed in less than 30 minutes, you will be issued a loaner device (based on availability).

Prior to reaching out to computer technician, here are some helpful tips:

Problem: My computer is frozen

Tip: *Try restarting your computer?*

Problem: My laptop isn't charging and the cable isn't frayed.

Tip: *Try using a different outlet*

Problem: My laptop doesn't connect to WiFi

Tip: *Please ensure that you have configured your laptop for your home WiFi network.*

Problem: I cannot connect to a Zoom session

Tip: *Go to mahwah.zoom.us and click "sign in." Sign in with your Mahwah email address. After signing in, click on the Zoom link to join the Zoom session.*

Additional resources to assist you with your technology:

- **Grade K-5:** http://bit.ly/mtpstechtipsk5
- **Grade 6-12**: http://bit.ly/mtpstechtips612

Food Distribution:

Our district is committed to the ongoing offering of lunch during the fully-remote period of schooling.

Mahwah Schools will continue to make meals available to any students that are in need. Through waivers granted by the US Department of Agriculture, all meals served during the 2020-2021 school year, whether in-person or remote, are offered at no cost to our students.

We must closely monitor and account for the meals that are served and, therefore, will use the following procedures for the distribution of meals.

Lunch will be provided on days when students receive instruction.

If you would like to receive lunch for your student(s), you have two options, found below:

Option 1 – Pick-up (an advance call or e-mail is not required)

- Meals will be available to be picked up at the following locations and times. Please be prepared with your students ID# when you arrive.
    - Mahwah High School (Auditorium Entrance)
      7:15am - 8:45am, & 2:pm - 3pm
    - Betsy Ross and George Washington Schools (Main Entrances)
      8am - 9am
- Parents may pick-up for multiple students across multiple schools at any location

Option 2 – Delivery (an advance call or email is required)

- Delivery of meals can only be performed by notifying the district in advance.
- Meals **must be ordered no later than Noon (12:00pm)** the day prior to delivery.
    - Meals for a Monday delivery need to be ordered on Friday.
- Please email foodservices@mahwah.k12.nj.us or call 201-762-2338
    - You will need to provide your student's name, ID Number, and address
    - Meals will be dropped off at your home that morning; there will be no contact with the driver.

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

Dear Mahwah Families,

With the anticipated storm coming Wednesday night into Thursday, there is a likelihood that we will be using a snow day on Thursday. Depending on the amount of snow that accumulates Thursday, the resulting road conditions for the morning commute on Friday, and the inability to offer a delayed opening with our current compressed schedules, there may also be a need to engage in a fully-remote learning day for Friday. However, it is only after careful review of the weather reports that we will be able to make an official call to the district for either day.

The weather reports are also indicating that there is a potential for power outages during this storm, and we know that this can create difficulties for our students working through our virtual program.

Should any student encounter issues related to loss of power or Internet, his/her attendance will not be recorded as absent, and teachers will address the unattended school day by providing instruction on the missed material. You can advise your principal of any issues related to Internet connectivity or electricity as a result of the storm.

The forecast for a potential record-setting snowfall has our students and staff excited about the opportunity to participate in the first snow day for the 2020-2021 school year. Please share your snow day images with us along the way!

Estimadas familias de Mahwah,

Con la tormenta anticipada del miércoles por la noche al jueves, es probable que tengamos un día de nieve el jueves. Dependiendo de la cantidad de nieve que se acumule el jueves, las condiciones de la carretera resultantes para el viaje diario de la mañana del viernes y la incapacidad de ofrecer una apertura retrasada con nuestros horarios comprimidos actuales, también puede ser necesario participar en un día de aprendizaje completamente remoto para el viernes. Sin embargo, es

solo después de una revisión cuidadosa de los informes meteorológicos que podremos hacer una llamada oficial al distrito para cualquier día.
Los informes meteorológicos también indican que existe la posibilidad de cortes de energía durante esta tormenta, y sabemos que esto puede crear dificultades para nuestros estudiantes que trabajan a través de nuestro programa virtual.

Si algún estudiante encuentra problemas relacionados con la pérdida de energía o Internet, su asistencia no se registrará como ausente, y los maestros abordarán el día escolar sin asistencia proporcionando instrucción sobre el material perdido. Puede informar al director de su escuela sobre cualquier problema relacionado con la conectividad a Internet o la electricidad como resultado de la tormenta.

El pronóstico de una posible nevada sin precedentes tiene a nuestros estudiantes y personal entusiasmados con la oportunidad de participar en el primer día de nieve para el año escolar 2020-2021. ¡Comparta sus imágenes del día de nieve con nosotros a lo largo de la nevada!

Sincerely,

Mahwah Administrative Team

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

December 16, 2020

Good Morning Parents!!

For the next few weeks while the district is on full-remote, we will be offering two ways to get lunch!

1. There will be 3 convenient locations, based on where you live in the district, where you can pick up a lunch (no pre-order necessary). See the flyer below or the attached PDF for locations and times.

2. We will have a delivery option! All you have to do is email the food service office directly at foodservices@mahwah.k12.nj.us or call **(201)762-2338**.

It is important that you leave your child's name, ID#, school and address on the message machine!

The driver will then come to your house later in the morning ring your bell and drop off the meal.

So that we can be prepared, it is vital that **all orders be placed by 12:00 noon the day before.**

For Monday orders, your request must be in by 12:00 noon on Friday.

We will be following the same monthly menu, which you can find on the Mahwah District Website.

FOR THIS COMING MONDAY, PLEASE HAVE ALL ORDERS FOR DELIVERY IN BY 12:00 noon THURSDAY 12-17.



Thank you for your support!

Stay safe and enjoy the upcoming holidays!

Sincerely,

Holly Krizek

Holly Krizek

Food Services Manager

Mahwah School District

(201) 762-2338
foodservices@mahwah.k12.nj.us

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February 1, 2021

Dear Mahwah Staff and Families,

It's of no surprise that we are writing to you this evening. It is amazingly evident that when our students and staff get together to welcome a snow day … well, the snow listens!

We hope this note finds you relaxed. Whether you were able to try something new, enjoy each other's company, or just reset, we hope you are making the most of this valuable time!

Our facilities crew are hard at work to make our grounds safe for our students' and staff members' return to on-site learning.

…and this snowfall certainly remains a doozy!

Clearly, the snow is continuing on this evening so that it is best that we simply say it now: **Tomorrow, February 2, the school district will be on full-remote instruction**.

Building principals will contact you with the plan specific for each school.

Please take a moment to upload your snow-day family pictures, videos, and memories to: Snow Day Pics/Videos

We will continue to monitor the weather throughout Tuesday into Wednesday and communicate with you again regarding our reopening for in-person instruction.

With snowy sincerity,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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Director of Special Services

February 4, 2021

Good morning, Mahwah,

The Virtual Wednesday, as planned, is taking place on alternating weeks, and will continue through the month of March.

Thus far, Virtual Wednesdays serve as opportunities for in-school deep cleaning, as a provided break in calculating potential exposure as part of our contact tracing process, and as an opportunity for teachers to conduct advanced planning, to collaborate, to further explore instructional technology, and to pre-teach our students what a return to full-remote instruction could look like.

While it has all of this value, the reality is that our current data does not demonstrate improvement towards wellness, which is why – in our re-evaluation of Virtual Wednesdays – they will continue in these upcoming weeks.

To assist you with advanced planning, we would like to share the dates for the future Virtual Wednesdays through the month of March.

- February 10, 2021
- February 24, 2021
- March 10, 2021
- March 24, 2021

Building-based details about Virtual Wednesdays will continue to be provided to your classroom teachers and building administration.

Sincerely,

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.

Interim Superintendent

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Dear Mahwah Community,

As you have already heard from your buildings, February is Black History Month

During our work in preparing our school district's strategic plan, working with various stakeholders, it was evident that there is a collective commitment on focusing our efforts towards creating an environment of respect and appreciation for diversity, as well as our commitment to equity for all those who are underrepresented, both in our community and the nation as a whole.

But, especially, for our students.

As we celebrate Black History Month, we honor those who have led the way and those that continue with the mission.

We honor John Mercer Langston, the first black man to become a lawyer in the state of Ohio in 1854, and Thurgood Marshall, the first African American ever appointed to the United States Supreme Court. We honor Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement.

We celebrate black scientists, like George Washington Carver, an agricultural scientist, Otis Boykin, who invented a control unit for the pacemaker, and Alice Ball, a chemist who developed the first successful treatment for those suffering from leprosy. We honor Mae Jemison, the first African American female astronaut. We honor Nelson Mandela, a South African anti-apartheid political leader, who emphasized: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

And we agree.

Black history has contributed to the arts, with the Harlem Renaissance, during the early 20th century, that ignited artwork, poetry, music, and literature through the influences of Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Claude McKay, and Sterling Brown.

And through today, this influence still very much impacts our community for the greater good, where Kehinde Wiley's portraits adorn our contemporary museums, where Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett stands at the frontlines in the creation of a COVID-19 vaccine, and where Kamala Harris sits as the first female person of color to serve as vice-president, ushered into this role at the most recent presidential inauguration ceremony by Amanda Gorman, poet laureate, where she shared in her poem, "The Hill We Climb:"

> …And yet the dawn is ours
> Before we knew it
> Somehow we do it
> Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
> a nation that isn't broken
> but simply unfinished…

Teachers at all grade levels and across content areas will create opportunities to explore an awareness for our students, as well as celebrating the great contributions black history has brought to all history.

We ask that you please continue these important conversations at home with your children.

There is a power in our differences. Let's celebrate those differences together – this month and every month.

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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Director of Special Services

February 12, 2021

Dear Mahwah Families,

With the intention of a Phase I was the promise for a Phase II for the 2020-2021 school year.

While we have not yet directly communicated our plans with the community, we are working behind the scenes to plan for our next phase of increased in-school instruction. We recognize that, with the current requests and social media activity, there are members of our parent and student community that are interested in knowing the next steps towards our full-time return.

The task to create a safe increased seat-time return includes all of the work that was completed to have us return with a hybrid program - with additional issues to tackle. In order to do this properly, we have already re-engaged our original stakeholders for the planning of the next half of this school year. Additionally, we have worked with surrounding districts that are making or have made adjustments to their initial return protocols. This work is not merely changing the schedule and starting immediately. It involves changing bus contracts, engaging vendors, ordering additional PPE, and closely reviewing all logistics and safety measures that impact school operations. Within the new return plan, this will result in families needing to adjust their childcare arrangements.

The return to an increase in hours within the school day will result in you, as parents, recognizing that there will be factors around reasonable distancing, prolonged use of masks, or times at which students may be unmasked for eating and drinking - all of which we will look to increase/add PPE and other creative solutions needed to mitigate the risks, such as the use of outdoor space. Furthermore, while our mitigating standards are proven to be successful within our schools, we know that the increased stress on our safety mechanisms will require a diligence to the attention of all of us around attesting to our wellness before entering the buildings and remaining vigilant outside of school connections.

We are extremely proud of the work that we have accomplished with staff, faculty, students, parents and our community of residents. We have learned a lot and it is being used to guide us into the next phase of our work. The education of our students, and the safety of our staff and students remains a high priority item. We also understand that we need to continue to look for opportunities to increase school time, but not at the expense of the safety of our students and staff.

We are committed to working with our teachers, administrators, and parents in gathering ideas to continue to dive deeper into this work.

You will be receiving a Phase II survey next week in order to gather your feedback and suggestions for this next phase, as these results will ultimately allow for us to commit to a Phase II return date. Please participate in this data-gathering activity. We will be sharing the recommendations as we review them. It is important to reiterate that the return plan will result in families needing to adjust their childcare arrangements, particularly for our elementary families. We are committed to giving you notice to do this in a timely manner.

We appreciate all of the support during these difficult times and look forward to our work together. These times continue to require us to work as a community, but we must remain methodical, cautious, and connected.

As we have shared in previous communication to you, our caution around health and safety exists to keep us vigilant, and while we have not allowed for this caution to betray our optimism, we must be reminded that our aim remains consistent - to do the best for our children, and to do so in the safest way possible.

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

Mahwah Schools

Restart and Recovery Plan: PHASE II

February 17, 2021

Up to now . . .

- July 31, 2020: District-specific plans for reopening were due to county.

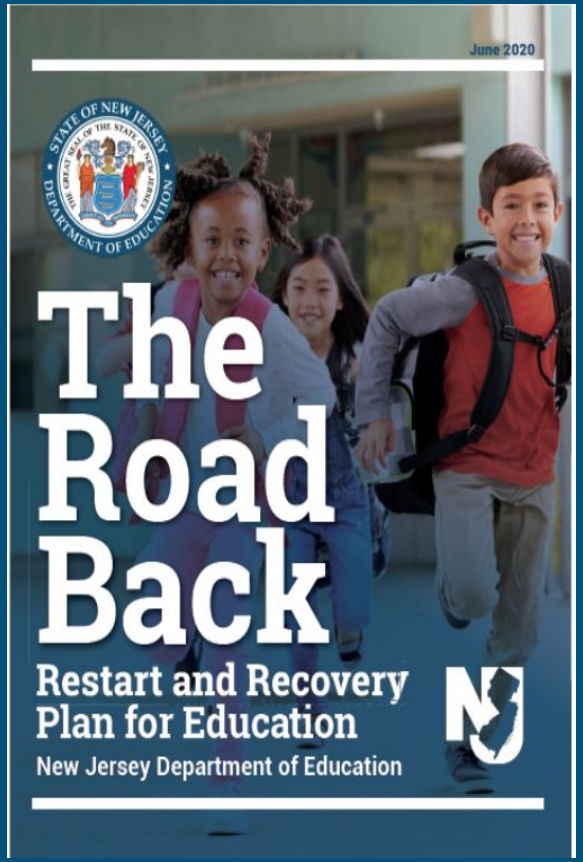
- September 2020: Phase I of reopening plan certified by county.

- Throughout first-half of school year: Review of CDC, Department of Health, and Department of Education updates regarding COVID-19 guidance.
  - Learning within the schools
  - Hybrid and fully-remote instructional programs - to the best of our ability

Key Elements of *The Road Back* Guidance

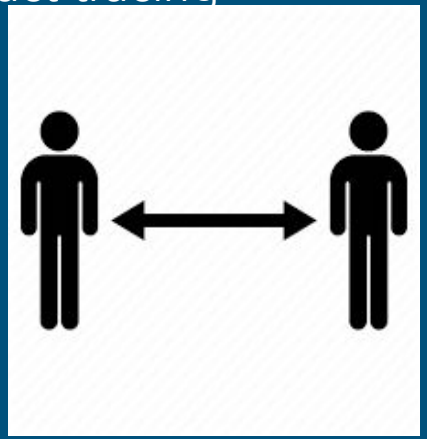
- Conditions for Learning
- Leadership and Planning
- Policy and Funding
- Continuity of Learning

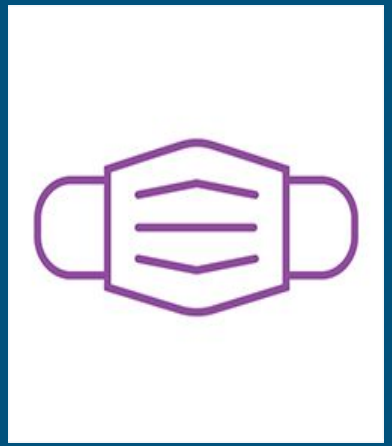
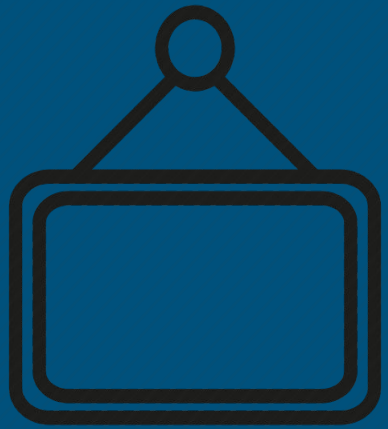
- General Health and Safety Guidelines
- Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms
- Transportation
- Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas
- Screening, PPE, and Response to Individuals Presenting Symptoms
- Contact Tracing
- Facilities Cleaning Practices
- Meals
- Recess/Physical Education
- Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside School Hours



Our Core Mitigation Strategies

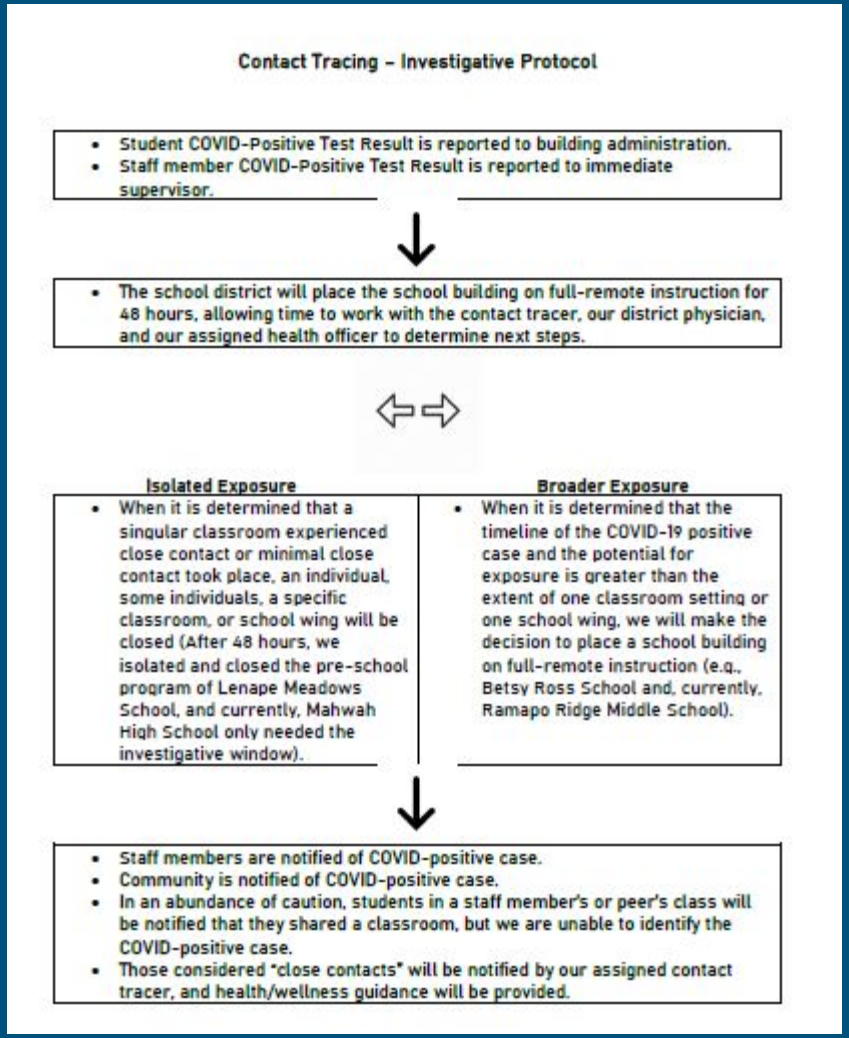
- Universal and correct use of masks
- Physical Distancing/Plexiglass
- Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette
- Signage and Floor Markings
- Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities
- Contact tracing

Contact Tracing:

- COVID-19 Dashboard
- Decision process
  - Administrative team
  - School nurse
  - District physician
  - Department of Health



Contact Tracing – Investigative Protocol

- Student COVID-Positive Test Result is reported to building administration.
- Staff member COVID-Positive Test Result is reported to immediate supervisor.

↓

- The school district will place the school building on full-remote instruction for 48 hours, allowing time to work with the contact tracer, our district physician, and our assigned health officer to determine next steps.

⇦⇨

Isolated Exposure	Broader Exposure
• When it is determined that a singular classroom experienced close contact or minimal close contact took place, an individual, some individuals, a specific classroom, or school wing will be closed (After 48 hours, we isolated and closed the pre-school program of Lenape Meadows School, and currently, Mahwah High School only needed the investigative window).	• When it is determined that the timeline of the COVID-19 positive case and the potential for exposure is greater than the extent of one classroom setting or one school wing, we will make the decision to place a school building on full-remote instruction (e.g., Betsy Ross School and, currently, Ramapo Ridge Middle School).

↓

- Staff members are notified of COVID-positive case.
- Community is notified of COVID-positive case.
- In an abundance of caution, students in a staff member's or peer's class will be notified that they shared a classroom, but we are unable to identify the COVID-positive case.
- Those considered "close contacts" will be notified by our assigned contact tracer, and health/wellness guidance will be provided.

Contact Tracing:

- Total Number of Cases: 51
  - 2-week Classroom Closures: 4
  - 2-week School Building Closures: 5
  - 2-day Investigation Windows: 5
  - No closure needed: 37

- In case investigation and contact tracing, we review:
  - Shared rooms
  - Class schedules
  - Extracurricular - both supported by the district and outside of the school
  - Transportation
  - Other schools
  - Siblings and family members

Phase II Continues to Consider:

ELEMENTS FOR REOPENING



INSTRUCTION



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING



FACILITIES
FOOD SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION

In paving Mahwah's own road back...

Instruction

- Schedule, Classroom Setup, Remediation, Professional Development, Special Education and Related Services

Social-Emotional Learning

- Student Well-being, Staff Well-being, Parent/Family/Community, Nurses/Contact-Tracing

Facilities

- Transportation, Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas, Cleaning Protocols and Schedules, Food Services

Increased Time in School: Possible Solutions

- Elementary (Grades PreK-5) Instructional Ideas
  - A/B Day - Full Day
  - Remote students each day for compressed schedule
- Secondary (Grades 6-12) Instructional Ideas
  - A/B Day - Full Day
  - Remote students each day for compressed schedule
- Virtual Wednesdays
- Snack/lunch
  - Locations
  - Supervision

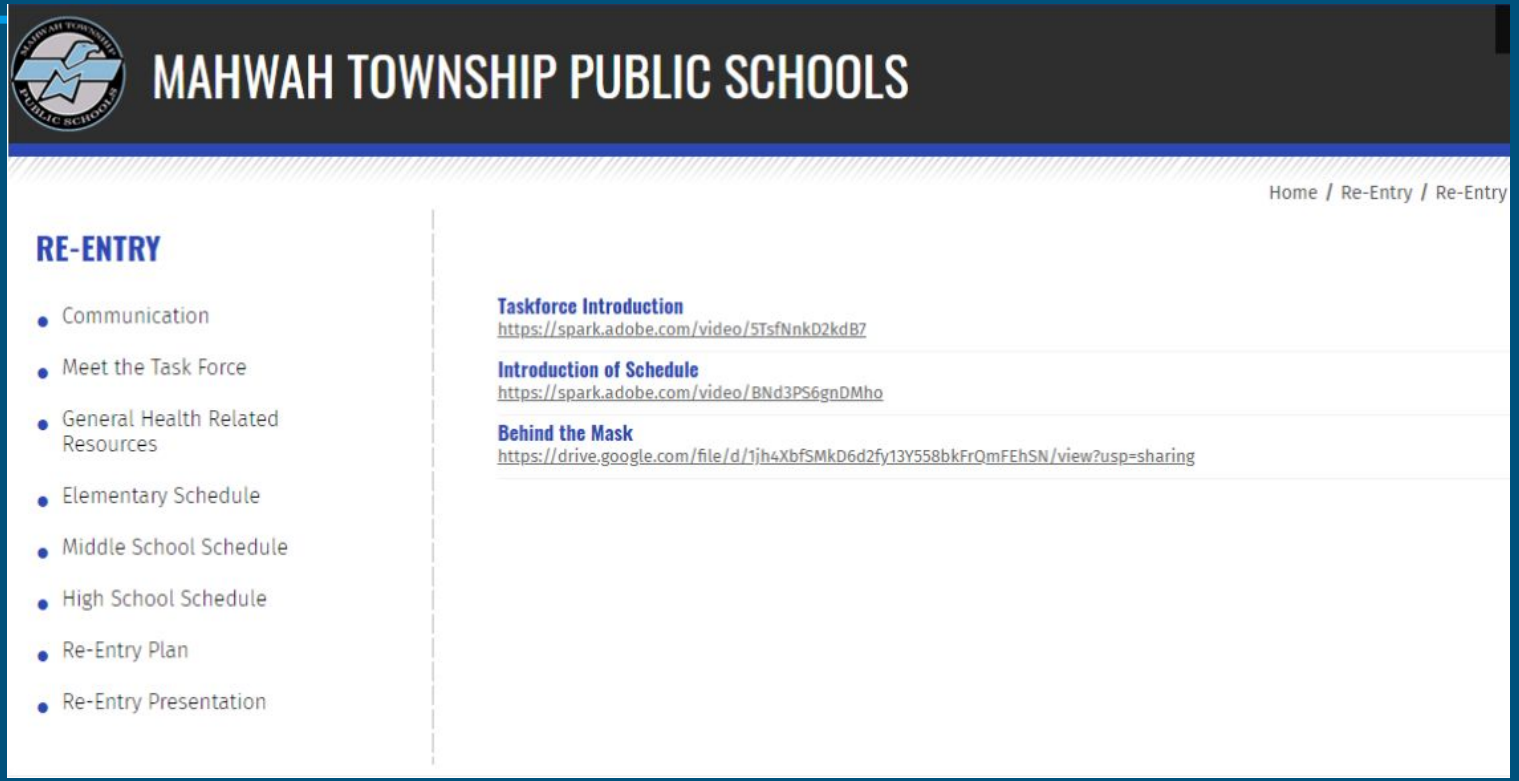
Quarantine Considerations:

- Ongoing review of travel advisory
- District maintenance to 14-day for the purposes of continuity and maintaining safety
  - Conservative approach is right for all staff and students.
  - Information related to this virus is ongoing.
  - Remain cautious due to variant strains of the virus and overarching responsibility for an entire population of students and staff, not just an individual case.
- Guidance on quarantine for those who have been fully-vaccinated

Re-entry Website

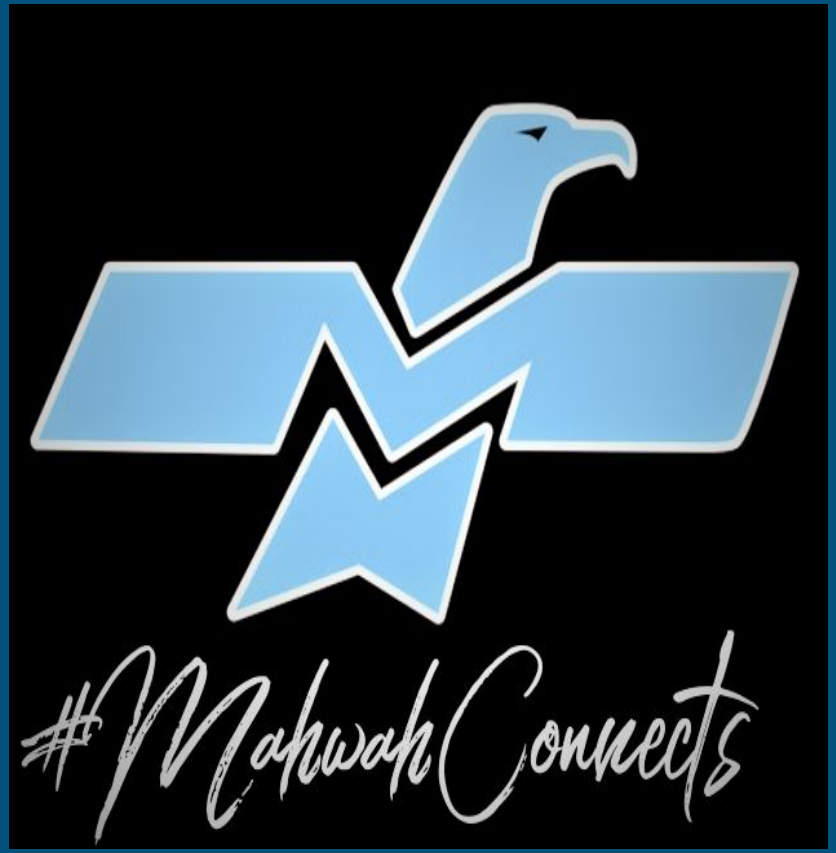
- Tab on our district homepage:
  - All communication
  - All updates and announcements related to COVID-19 and reopening
  - COVID-19 dashboard
  - All resources connected to instruction and social-emotional learning

Re-entry Website



What's next?

- Additional surveys to staff, students, and parents will be sent.
  - We will continue to analyze survey results and use those results for our decision-making.
- Additional stakeholder meetings.
- Virtual office hours with building principals.
- Distribution of a FAQ document with regular updates/changes made regarding Phase II.



As we prepare for Phase II:

- Continue to remain vigilant about your own health and wellness.
- We will continue to communicate regularly with our school community regarding updates to our plan, along with updated guidance from the CDC and NJDOH that may impact school operations.

We thank you for your continued collaboration and support during these times!

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

Dennis M. Fare
Assistant Superintendent

Michael DeTuro, Ed.D.
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Kyle J. Bleeker
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

Good afternoon, Mahwah,

We feel good when we are able to accurately make the right decision to call a snow day and there are times that the decision is not easy. For example, in making the call this morning, we were left uneasy because meteorological reports are rarely consistent and often leave us relying on our own sense of weather and its patterns.

Over the years, we have developed a system that is working for us, we consult with surrounding districts, and rely on the information from our colleagues at the Mahwah Police Department, and the Mahwah Department of Public Works. Every decision is rooted in staff and student safety.

With that said, as we have shared with the community in the past, our goal is to allow the students and staff to enjoy these days as a social-emotional "re-charge."

During our last snow day, some of our school community shared pictures and videos of how they enjoyed their snow day. Please click on the link below and enjoy, as we believe that these images and videos truly capture the spirit **of what a snow day is all about**:

Mahwah Snow Day Video

It is our hope that you are able to enjoy today and continue to make memories with your family.

In the meantime, please know that information regarding our return to Friday's instructional program is forthcoming!

With continued wintry warmth,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

February 19, 2021

Good afternoon, Mahwah,

Mother Nature certainly has a sense of humor this month!

Because of Her, we've had limited in-school access to our students. We've had a total of 5 snow days or virtual teaching days due to inclement weather during the month of February. This is not including the 2 scheduled vacation days and 1 scheduled Virtual Wednesday. In total, this is 8 days out of the possible 15 weekdays. We all can agree that our students need to be in the classroom with us more during February!

As a result, next Wednesday, February 24, which was initially scheduled as a Virtual Wednesday, **will instead be a regular in-school learning day for our hybrid students.**

This decision does not impact the remaining Virtual Wednesdays that are scheduled and remain as scheduled for **Wednesday, March 10** and **Wednesday, March 24**.

As we shared at the Board of Education meeting on February 17, it remains our truth: *Thank you - staff and parents - for your continued commitment to our students*.

We are proud to be on your team.

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

February 23, 2021

Good afternoon, Mahwah Community,

We have organized building level teams (consisting of staff and administration) with the goal of looking for opportunities to increase in-school time for our students.

Your insight was integral for our return in September and we are looking for your feedback at this point in the process. We ask you to complete one survey per child that is applicable to your family.

Knowing that this information informs our decision making, we ask you to complete the survey by Friday, 2/26/2021.

Elementary Parent Survey
Secondary Parent Survey

Thank you for your continued partnership in this process.

Sincerely,

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

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Director of Curriculum and Instruction

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Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

February 25, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

Making progress is defined as forward and onward movement toward a destination.

We are making headway towards Phase II and wanted to keep you informed. Phase II is intended to include more time in our schools for students.

In our preparation, the following actions are currently taking place to serve our increased daily enrollment within our schools:

- Building-based committees are meeting.
- Nurses are reviewing existing attestation protocols and processes.
- Administrators are reviewing committee input and making building-based recommendations to Central Office related to our instructional program for Phase II.
- Surveys are being completed by staff, parents, and students.
    - This survey data is being reviewed by our administrative team.
- Transportation is in contact with contractors to review all viable options related to supporting a new instructional schedule.
- New PPE purchases are being finalized, including plexiglass desk shields and other necessary items that will assist in continued mitigating of risk.
- Facility tours are scheduled to assess the changes to classroom layout.

To maintain continued momentum towards a safe increased return to school, we will evaluate our advancement, set additional goals, and share our progress with you.

Our continued collective commitments are:

- We are committed to providing a safe environment for our students and staff, with a continuous review of our on-site mitigating measures.

- We are committed to providing the resources and supports needed for our staff to successfully transition to Phase II.
- We are committed to supporting the social-emotional experience for both students and staff.
- We are committed to an ongoing review of our protocols.
- We are committed to increasing students' in-school learning experience.

As we have stated before, to our staff and community members, the sentiment remains: We thank you for your support along the way.

Respectfully,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

Dear Mahwah Community,

Welcome back and Happy New Year 2021!

As you are already witnessing, our staff prepared and are executing quality and engaging learning experiences in our time on remote for the entire district. We continue to be amazed by the efforts of the staff and the engagement of our students. We remain proud of staff members for their continued flexibility and steadfast work in their commitment to the instruction and care of our students.

While the students and teachers are working remotely, our maintenance and custodial staff have taken full advantage of this time to conduct a thorough cleaning and assessment of our buildings, grounds, and district busses. We are continually evaluating and monitoring our systems to ensure that they are providing a healthy, safe, and conducive learning environment.

Our technology team continues to enhance and assess our building-based capacity (e.g., bandwidth, connectivity, in-class and off-site technology needs), and to provide the on-demand support that may be needed by staff and students.

The staff will return to the building on January 18, 2021, to take part in a professional development day. During this time, they will learn more about social-emotional learning and self-care for adults and children, various technology strategies that will aid in their remote instructional delivery. Additionally, they will be engaged in collaboration that will allow them to speak about curricular pacing, instructional delivery, and student performance. Our professional development time will support us in planning effective instruction during these unprecedented times.

Our students are returning to our in-school hybrid program on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

If you would like your son or daughter to exit the fully- remote program and join our in- school hybrid program, please complete the Return to In-School Hybrid Program survey, by Monday, January 11, 2021.

Upon return to our in-school program, you are asked to continue to adhere to the health and safety protocols that are in place and are working to mitigate the risk.

Please continue to practice our proven best practices:

1. **Complete the daily attestation form.**
2. Wear a mask, keep a safe distance, and wash hands frequently.

3. Stay home if your child is unwell, experiencing any symptoms, awaiting a test result, or are a close contact to someone who is positive or awaiting test results. **See our November 24 letter and December 3 letter for more guidance.**

4. The district will continue with our requirement of a 14-day quarantine for COVID positive staff or students, or close contacts. Although the New Jersey Department of Health altered their guidance for various workplaces, it is clear that the quarantine time of 14 days is best for our in-school learning environment, especially in its role of mitigating risk while our region is currently "at high risk."

5. We will continue to use our 48-hour contact tracing window. As you may recall, this time is used to ensure that any and all close contacts are identified and notified.

To us, this new year means optimism. We are seizing the moment to review our past work, and to make adjustments to our future planning - always with our students in mind. Please continue to partner with us on this journey and stay *connected* throughout this process. We are making it through these difficult times together: by staying vigilant to our wellness, by engaging students both inside the classroom and at home, by collaborating with families, by leaning on the committed collective selflessness of this community, and by prioritizing our unified mission - the students of Mahwah.

#MahwahConnects

With sincere optimism for 2021,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

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Interim Superintendent

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Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Kyle J. Bleeker
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

January 7, 2021

Dear Parents and Families,

Our nation's current events have the potential to cause fear and/or division amongst our community and, in particular, have a significant adverse impact on our children and staff. It is evident that viewing the riots in Washington and the attack on our Nation's Capitol are unsettling for many adults and certainly for our children - and these events more than likely cause fear, confusion, and strong emotions because such actions are taught as unacceptable in our schools.

In a time like this, it's important to remind ourselves that our children, even when we think they are not watching or listening, are impacted by adults on TV, in the community, and in their own homes. We strongly encourage you to be conscientious of your child's viewing regarding the current events and find ways to explain the situation in a manner that supports your child's emotions and leaves them feeling safe and with a sense of hope. Our staff is meeting to work together on language and responses that will be used to address any student's emotions around these current events. We are a resource for students to process the emotionality of the past 24 hours but also understand that you, as parents, have the most significant impact on your child. Children are inherently curious and have many questions, some they will ask, some they will keep inside. It is important that our answers and our actions help our children develop into the kind, respectful, accepting adults we hope they become.

Acknowledging that navigating circumstances like this can be difficult for both educators and parents alike, we would like to share information to assist in your efforts to speak to and assist your children. The National Association of School Psychologists and The American Psychological Association offers information and resources regarding talking to your child about violence and promoting compassion and acceptance in crisis. As a parent or a guardian, you can:

- Support children's expression of fear with reassuring actions and conversations
- Reassure children they are safe
- If needed, make time to talk about the situation using language that is age appropriate and provide useful and accurate information
- Limit viewing or listening about the events
- Reinforce the message that violence and hate are never solutions to anger
- We are strong because of our diversity
- We are in this together and here to help each other
- Working for peace is a valuable goal
- Maintain your regular routine
- Observe your children's emotional state and contact your school should they demonstrate additional need for support

Let the last 24 hours be a reminder of the importance of our **togetherness** - for our students and each other. With all things, we are one nation and one community in our efforts to support and build up our students - our future.

#MahwahConnects

Sincerely,

Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

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Interim Superintendent

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Assistant Superintendent

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Director of Curriculum and Instruction

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Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

January 11, 2021

Dear Parents,

We are communicating with you during this remote learning time to advise you that we are currently addressing and contact tracing for five COVID-19 positive Mahwah High School students, and are monitoring several other students who were recently identified as close contacts to positive cases.

We are urgently reminding everyone that our time on fully remote learning is designed to reduce the number of close contacts as a result of holiday activities. It is extremely important that families adhere to the mitigating measures and encourage students to connect via virtual activities instead of face-to-face get-togethers.

In-school programs resume on Tuesday, January 19, and therefore, developing symptoms and testing positive now will result in individual students being required to quarantine for the mandated time. Further, if your child traveled or is still traveling, you are required to share this information with your school nurse, and the mandated quarantine period is to take effect upon your return to New Jersey, regardless of your activities outside of the state.

<u>Please do your part to keep our community safe by</u>:

- Washing your hands
- Wearing a mask
- Keeping socially distant
- Staying home if you are unwell
- Observing mandated quarantine times

Sincerely,

Leonard D. Fitts

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent

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Director of Curriculum and Instruction

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Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

January 14, 2021

Welcome back!

Our doors will open to our hybrid students on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

We previously shared with you the details of our planning for our return to school. Our plans regarding sprucing the facilities, attending to technology, and planning for our on-site learning are being finalized now and will be ready prior to your arrival back to school.

COVID-19 requires a social contract between each other in which we agree to disclose our health status to close contacts and willfully remain at home during a time in which we may be returning from travel, are unwell, are suspect of being unwell, or are identified as a close contact. Completing our attestation form with integrity means honestly answering each question so that no one person is placed in medical harm's way because of willful neglect of the truth. This social contract is very important in working through this pandemic as a Mahwah community.

This highly contagious and communicable disease strikes each person differently, but nonetheless, we must act and navigate this pandemic as if everyone's overall health will be most severely impacted if exposed.

It is true that the quarantine period can seem as an undue burden, but we have secured quality supports for our students and staff while they are at home and unable to attend school. Our secondary students are able to be completely engaged in their regular academic classes via Zoom and the elementary students are fully supported with direct teacher contact so that skills are not lost while completing the sequestered time. There is no reason why anyone should attend school or work when quarantining is required; our system created the appropriate alternative for you to remain at home.

We are returning on January 19 to our in-school instructional program, and we are expecting you to be supportive of our global health by following the guidelines below, devised in consultation with our district physician:

STATUS	TIME OUT OF SCHOOL (Consult school nurse on all matters.)
Traveled to a state on the quarantine list	14 days from date of return home. Negative test result does not negate the need to quarantine.
Tested positive	14 days from the date of the test.
Identified as a close contact	14 days from the date of last contact with COVID positive person. Negative test result does not negate the need to quarantine.
Exhibiting symptoms, but not tested	14 days, may not return until all symptoms have passed and are fever-free for 24 hours without medication.
Exhibiting symptoms, and PCR tested negative.	May not return until symptom-free and fever-free for 24 hours without medication.
Even if previously COVID-positive, and identified as a close contact or exhibiting symptoms.	Must adhere to all required quarantine time frames.
If identified as a close contact, and subsequently, receive a positive test result during the quarantine period.	Continue with quarantine and add 14 days from the test date
Residing with someone who is COVID-19 positive and you are unable to safely quarantine or isolate in your home. Referred to as "continuous exposure."	10 days from positive test + 14 days
Answering "Yes" on the daily attestation form	May not attend school; contact nurse for additional guidance.

STATUS	TIME OUT OF SCHOOL (Consult school nurse on all matters.)
Residing with someone who is awaiting a test result.	May not attend school until the family member or housemate receives a negative test result.
Residing with someone with COVID-19 symptoms	May not attend school until symptomatic individual receives a negative test.
Awaiting your own test results (regardless of reason for testing)	May not attend school until negative test result is received.
Participating or attending any location that exceeds maximum capacity regulations within the state of NJ or a non-quarantine state (e.g., water parks, sporting event, concert, or other large gathering).	14-day quarantine or PCR negative is the only test to allow re-entry.

* Rapid tests are only accepted to confirm a positive case.
* PCR is the only test to confirm a negative result.
* Alternative diagnosis cannot replace the requirement of a COVID-19 test result or serving of quarantine/isolation time.

As we continue through the spring, we have set up a COVID-19 dashboard on our re-entry website, sharing district actions regarding our COVID-19 positive cases. This will be updated regularly for public view.

On Tuesday morning, we resume the need to complete our daily attestation form. We were at or near 100% completion rate in December; let's have complete participation on Tuesday. If you are unsure as to your child's eligibility to return to school then please have him or her remain at home until you can consult with your school nurse.

All of our re-entry taskforce teams are meeting this month to revisit all aspects of our plans, evaluate our effectiveness to date, and make suggestions for future changes.

Our facilities staff remain at work completing various tasks that were identified prior to the break so that we can continue to offer our in-school program a healthy workspace. Our regular touch-

point cleaning throughout the day will continue as will our thorough cleaning at the end of each day.

Lunch will be served at the buildings using prior protocol and we will no longer take phone orders or delivery requests. The lunch subsidy continues to be available and will remain this school year so that all families are eligible for a no-cost lunch.

As we return to our in-school learning experience during these unique times, we remain committed to providing our students and staff with an environment that adheres to all health guidelines and delivering an instructional program at a high level. The addition of our dashboard reinforces our commitment to transparency to all involved.

We thank you for your continued partnership to keep our community healthy while educating our students; we remain proud to say that we are in this together.

Sincerely,

Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

Dennis M. Fare
Assistant Superintendent

Michael DeTuro, Ed.D.
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Kyle J. Bleeker
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

January 31, 2021

So, here we are: A second snow day is in the books for Mahwah!

Enjoy the day and unplug because each of you deserve just that!

Try a new recipe. Open a new book. Or pick up the book you haven't had time to read in weeks! Have a meaningful conversation with a friend or family member. Set up an inside obstacle course! Or just relax.

Try some science experiments. Play balloon tennis! Ever try a game of indoor bowling?

Do some painting! Bake cookies. Have an indoor picnic. Or try a food you've never tried before!

Or go sledding! Make a snowman outside, or an edible one inside out of marshmallows! Write winter-themed cards to your relatives. Take out some old board games! Learn how to play chess. What about trying out a new craft? Make paper snowflakes!

Put on a play. Or pop in a movie!

Find time to express who you are on this snow day, and after all of your outdoor escapades or indoor adventures, feel the warmth of being on a snow day, with Mahwah connecting in this together.

Because, together . . . **we saved it. We saved the snow day**!

See what saving the snow day means to some of our staff members here: Sledding, Snacks, and Everything In-Between. Mahwah Saves the Snow Day!

With wintry warmth,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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Director of Special Services

June 8, 2021

On May 18, 2021, the district took a step towards relaxing our mask requirements when students were outdoors. Based upon the recent communications (June 7, 2021) from Governor Murphy's postings via Twitter, Mahwah is prepared to continue to offer more flexibility to masking.

Outdoors

In all activities outdoors of the school - including physical education class, snacking, all outdoor learning activities (study hall, whole class activities, and small group instruction), and any school-based activities, such as field day or various other end-of- year activities - students and faculty **are permitted to be fully unmasked** regardless of their ability to be socially distanced.

This change will remain in effect throughout the remainder of the school year.

Students and staff who elect to remain masked are supported in their decision to do so.

Transportation

We continue to have open windows for fresh air on all our buses when transporting students. Roof hatches are also open to allow for air to escape. For buses equipped with air conditioning, it is being used to maintain a more comfortable temperature, but its impact is limited due to the open windows to promote airflow. Therefore, riders are permitted to **use their discretion and may remove their masks.** Drivers who are fully vaccinated, as defined by the CDC, may also remove their masks.

Students and staff who elect to remain masked are supported in their decision to do so.

Indoors

Consistent with guidance recently communicated by Governor Murphy, he shared that "in-school masking requirements include **exceptions for extreme heat**." In light of the district's ability to **provide most classrooms with cooler temperatures via air-conditioning, the indoor masking rules will remain in place.**

Principals were advised that, with their discretion on mask flexibility, should the indoor air temperatures be impacted by exceeding outdoor temperatures or due to an air

conditioner under maintenance or an overall indoor temperature greater than 76°, that masking requirements shall be altered for comfort and safety in these circumstances. The requirements around social distancing and the continued use of plexiglass will remain.

Students and staff who elect to remain masked are supported in their decision to do so.

Mahwah Administrative Team

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

June 14, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community:

We entered the year knowing that there would be pockets of uncertainty. We are coming around the final stretch of the 2020-2021 school year, and we are certain it was the best it could be and - at times - better than we initially imagined. Braving the unknown, our community of students, educators, support staff, parents and the entire township demonstrated that, in any of the unsure or unknown, we met the challenge with tenacity, spirit, and pride.

Our schools are able to end the year shrouded in most of our typical end-of-the-year events. The senior prom - the best prom ever, transition grades visiting their new schools, field days, secondary art show, theatrical events, publishing parties, and curriculum nights. Soon, the culmination with elementary clap-outs, 8th grade promotion, and the graduation of the class of 2021.

Our summer experiences are ready to greet our students. The teachers are committed to an enriching and engaging good time!

We began the formal planning for 2021-2022 in December via our budgeting process. Details of the start of the year will be communicated to you in August, with the understanding that we await NJDOE formal guidance. The new plan, as required in order to use the federal funding support APR for the State, is called the "Safe Return and Continuity of Service Plan," which serves the purpose of preliminary-thinking plans to be shared on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at the Board of Education meeting and posted on our site thereafter. This federally-mandated plan is merely used as a sketch of how schools around the country can allow for in-person instruction (some still being remote). This is something that we have executed and reported on throughout the year. The comprehensive plans for the 2021-2022 school year will be shared with our community in August.

On the first day of school in September, we were not able to share in some traditional activities with you.

However, you are encouraged to participate in all the closing activities we offer.

<u>Families are invited to come take your last day of school photos in front of the schools! We will be outside to celebrate this year's end as #MahwahConnects!</u>

To all who stood with us, showed up every day, trusted us, and supported this organization, we are grateful.

We will see you at the finish line!

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

June 22, 2021

Last week, when we wrote to you about nearing the finish line, we knew that we would be communicating one more time before we officially said good-bye to the 2020-2021 school year.

Since June of 2020, we have been preoccupied with the planning for this school year. We had to create our plans in pencil because we knew that, with language being used like "pivot," "flexible," "unprecedented," and "never before," that our best-laid plans would be subjected to rewrites and revisions along the way. Parents had to schedule childcare or employment in various aspects of full-day, partial day, am or pm, with any other configurations requested of you, and be prepared when you received notice of a 48-hour closing for contact tracing. Teachers were asked to plan for live instruction and remain prepared at any moment to teach via remote means. Our children were concentrating on getting back to normal and were greeted with distance, shortened days, continued virtual learning, and brief moments of "typical" but mostly all different-than-ever before-school days.

We liken the school year to a race or, even more appropriately labeled, a *marathon* because so many of us want to see this to an end and with a gallant crossing over the finish line. For all of us, this year was like training for and running the marathon at the same time. But even in these circumstances, we cannot rush to a close without thoughtfully recalling all of the moments that made these trying times livable with moments of joy. Rather than us identifying times in your life or education from this year that exceeded your expectations, we ask that you share with each other in the faculty rooms, classrooms, or at your dinner tables, the happy moments that made 2020-2021 special in its own unique way for you.

Introspective of the year that has passed, we know that the strength of our schools rests solely in the kind of people that exist within those walls in school or at home. To the amazing faculty, paraprofessionals, maintenance/custodians, bus drivers, supervisors, assistant principals, principals, parents/caregivers, and students, at the end of this race, we celebrate with the victory cheer: WE ARE, WE ARE MAHWAH.

Thank you for supporting our schools and thank you for staying *connected* with us during this journey.

And as we cross this finish line, find rest within yourselves. Walk off the long run; take much-needed time for you and your loved ones; *and just be*. We will connect again in August when we prepare for our next lap together: in preparation for 2021-2022.

#MahwahConnects

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
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Director of Curriculum and Instruction

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Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

March 4, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

Informed by the data from our most recent surveys, educated with information from our building-based return teams, and reinvigorated by our recent open office hours meetings where staff was able to meet with administration, we are finalizing the plans for an increase of time during in-school learning, otherwise known as "Phase II."

Our community may recall that the district planned to increase our in-person instructional program back in November 2020; however, this decision was waylaid by an increase in COVID cases in our area. Currently, our region's COVID cases are decreasing, and it is an appropriate time to initiate our increase of in-person time for our hybrid students.

In considering all logistics related to in-person learning, along with our most recent health department guidance, we have made the decision to increase our on-site program for all hybrid students in the following manner, as shared in a presentation at our Board of Education meeting on March 3, 2021.

Hybrid Students

Secondary

- Cohort A ("Pride") and Cohort B ("Spirit") will be combined to attend in-person learning every day. The daily instructional schedule will continue as it is currently followed (Mahwah High School: Zero Period: 6:54 a.m. – 7:34 a.m. | 7:40 a.m. – 12:18 p.m. Ramapo Ridge Middle School: 8:00 a.m. – 12:49 p.m.). Afternoon sessions will remain as fully-remote office hours with our staff for opportunities for individualized student instruction.

- Over a 2-week period, the secondary students will increase from 5 days in school to 10 days in school.

The combining of cohorts A and B increase will begin on Monday, March 15, 2021.

Over the course of the next two weeks, school staff will prepare for this transition. Our secondary schedules are currently being adjusted. Audit of class/section numbers, as well as bus

ridership are being finalized. Mitigating measures will continue, with additional desk shields to be installed in instructional spaces, as needed.

Elementary

- Planning committees are working on an outline for consolidating the AM/PM cohorts for a combined learning experience lasting 4 hours of in-person learning for the day and continuing remotely in the afternoon (inclusive of specials, small group instruction, or asynchronous work).

- This adjustment will increase in-person/seat-time by 65%.

- Students will be practicing activities now that mimic what an increase of in-person learning will look like (e.g., sitting at desks instead of tables, entry/exit protocols, movement around the classroom, possible adjustments to dismissal procedures, and practicing classroom routines with more students present) in preparation for Phase II. This will allow for our staff members to pre-teach our youngest students the important skills needed for when our increase of in-person instruction/program takes place.

- Challenges that we are working through to make this in-person increase a reality: Adjustments of the instructional schedule, working with bus contractors to draft new contracts, possibly compressing some routes due to low ridership, and the opportunity for students to have snack.

We have tentatively secured the elementary return for Monday, March 29, 2021. This is dependent on a number of factors specific to transportation and the acquisition of proper PPE.

Fully-Remote Students

Secondary

- Instruction will continue to take place via Zoom videoconferencing.

- Office hours will remain in effect for you to join for individualized instruction.

Elementary

- Instruction will continue to take place via Zoom videoconferencing.

- Instructional day will increase to 4 hours.

After we have increased our in-person learning experience, we will take the time to review our success, correct our errors, monitor our overall health and wellness, allowing this program to stabilize before we make any additional changes, such as adding our fully-remote students to our on-site program.

While there are pre-planned dates during which our fully-remote learners could rejoin their hybrid cohorts, these dates are being reviewed and may need to be adjusted. Instructions for changing from full-remote to in-person will be shared with you in a separate e-mail communication in the coming weeks and from your building principal.

Phase II Video – Messages from Our Principals

As we have shared with you in previous communications, the return to an increase in hours within the school day will result in you, as parents, accepting that there will be factors around reasonable distancing (that may be less than six-feet depending on classroom configuration - with distancing occurring to the greatest extent possible), prolonged use of masks, or times at which students may be unmasked for eating and drinking - all of which we will look to increase/add PPE and other creative solutions needed to mitigate the risks, such as the use of outdoor space.

We learned over the course of this past year that our commitment to making sound decisions for *everyone* is the most ethical approach by which we can stand by and we make no decision lightly. As we proceed, we will continue to be conscientious in our decision-making process. Our work has been a collaborative effort and our stakeholders' voices have been a cornerstone for our move forward.

All questions moving forward regarding our move to Phase II should be directed to your building principal or MahwahReentry@mahwah.k12.nj.us, just as we had done this summer in preparation for our Phase I.

Thank you for working alongside us.

Respectfully,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

Dennis M. Fare
Assistant Superintendent

Michael DeTuro, Ed.D.
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Kyle J. Bleeker
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

March 5, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

Below, please find guidance regarding spring break travel advisory:

Please be advised that the district is significantly concerned about potential travel during spring break and recommend that travel only take place for matters that cannot otherwise be rescheduled. Any type of outbreak can result in the loss of in-person learning time. The district will not have a two-week post-break closure for virtual learning. Schools will reopen on April 12, 2021 for our hybrid students.

Using the new travel requirements of the district, below is guidance designed to assist you with *potential* return dates from any states or countries listed on the New Jersey travel advisory (all states other than New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Delaware). At this time (3/3/21), individuals who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 should continue to follow the State's travel advisory.

Please contact your school nurse prior to April 1 to discuss your travel and return plans.

The purpose of the following table is to provide you with all options regarding quarantine and return to our on-site program. Please note: Day 1 of a travel quarantine calculation is the day after your feet touch Mahwah.

Date of Return to New Jersey	PCR date (5 days upon return to Mahwah)	Return date with Negative PCR (7 days post return to Mahwah)	Return date without PCR (14 days post return to Mahwah)	Return date with positive PCR (PCR on day 5 and 14 days post-positive test)
Friday, April 2	April 7	April 12	April 16	14 days post-positive test
Saturday, April 3	April 8	April 12	April 19	14 days post-positive test
Sunday, April 4	April 9	April 12	April 19	14 days post-positive test
Monday, April 5	April 10	April 13	April 20	14 days post-positive test
Tuesday, April 6	April 11	April 14	April 21	14 days post-positive test
Wednesday, April 7	April 12	April 15	April 22	14 days post-positive test

Date of Return to New Jersey	PCR date (5 days upon return to Mahwah)	Return date with Negative PCR (7 days post return to Mahwah)	Return date without PCR (14 days post return to Mahwah)	Return date with positive PCR (PCR on day 5 and 14 days post-positive test)
Thursday, April 8	April 13	April 16	April 23	14 days post-positive test
Friday, April 9	April 14	April 19	April 26	14 days post-positive test
Saturday, April 10	April 15	April 19	April 26	14 days post-positive test
Sunday, April 11	April 16	April 19	April 26	14 days post-positive test

If you should have additional questions, please reach out to your building principal or school nurse.

We ask that our students, families, and staff continue to take all mitigating measures to remain safe during our upcoming spring break.

Sincerely,

Dr. Leonard Fitts, Interim Superintendent

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Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

March 5, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community:

We have determined that we are able to update the travel advisory protocol, effective March 8, 2021. It remains our recommendation that travel for leisure or non-emergency related activities is not recommended and could have the ill-effect of compromising our ability to effectively maintain in-school learning opportunities for our students.

Should families of hybrid students elect to travel outside of New Jersey to any state on the New Jersey travel ban list, you must consult with your school nurse prior to your departure date and upon return to Mahwah to discuss your return from travel quarantine requirements for our district's staff and students.

For those who travel and remain outside of New Jersey for 24 hours or more, the following requirements must be met to return to school. The advisory is no longer specific to certain states. Because of the rising number of case counts across all states, there is an increased risk of spread of COVID-19 upon return from any travel. However, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware are considered the immediate region and do not require adherence to the travel advisory.

At this time (3/5/21), individuals who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 should continue to follow the State's travel advisory.

Pre-planning with the School Nurse

1. In advance of your trip, share your plans with the nurse and discuss your post-travel quarantine.

Return from Travel

1. Contact the school nurse to finalize post-travel quarantine plans.

Post-travel quarantine

Get Tested and Stay Home After Travel

1. Upon return home, immediately self-quarantine.
2. Get tested with a viral test (PCR) no sooner than 5 days after return to Mahwah (no rapid tests permitted), and remain at home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after return.
3. Provide school nurse with documentation of negative test 5 days post travel.
4. Remain symptom-free.
5. Finalize return date with school nurse.

Test results (after 5 days at home)

Negative test results

1. Stay home and remain on self-quarantine for the full 7 days.

Positive test results

1. Isolate yourself and remain out of school for 14 days from the date of a positive test result.

NOT tested upon return home

1. Stay home and self-quarantine for 14 days post-travel.

All travel to locations on the travel advisory requires contact with your school nurse prior to departure and upon return to Mahwah.

Travel Advisory Guidance:

Status	Actions	Time Out Of School
Travel to any location on the travel-ban list (viral tested)	Return home to immediately self-quarantine; Viral (PCR) test 5 days after return to Mahwah	Negative test and symptom-free; return to school after 7 days of self-quarantine
Travel to any location on the travel-ban list (not tested)	Return home to immediately self-quarantine	14-day quarantine when not tested upon return from travel
Travel to any location on travel-ban list (positive test)	Return home to immediately self-quarantine; Viral (PCR) test 5 days after return to Mahwah	Positive test result requires 14-day quarantine from the date of the test results

Faculty and students who travel and seek to use a negative viral test to return to school after 7 days post-travel must provide the school nurse with documentation of a negative test result. The documentation must include the name of the person tested, name of the doctor or facility that conducted the test, date of the test, and clearly denote a negative test result.

Thank you,

Mahwah Administrative Team

Frequently Asked Questions – Phase II

What are the confirmed start dates for Phase II?

Secondary (Grades 6-12): Monday, March 15 (Ramapo Ridge Middle School, Mahwah High School)

- This start date will be where combined in-person cohorts attend together on each day that school is in session.
    - The hours for the in-person school day remain the same at each school.
- Phase II for full-remote students who elect to enter the in-person instructional program will remain scheduled for April 12.

Elementary (Grades K-5): Monday, March 29 (Betsy Ross, George Washington, Lenape Meadows, Joyce Kilmer)

- This start date will be for **both current hybrid students and full-remote students** who elect to return to on-site learning.
    - The start time for each in-person school experience will remain the same and we are finalizing the end time for each school day with transportation. You will be advised when the time is determined.

Will my child be able to have snack during Phase II? If so, where?

<u>Elementary</u>

At the elementary school level, there will be an opportunity for a snack break. We will be creative in using outdoor spaces, mask break areas and even hallways where students will have either mats or towels to sit on. When these spaces are not available, students will eat their snack behind a plexiglass desk shield in the classroom. Students can wear their face shields while they take their masks off during snack and some teachers will even alternate who is eating at one time such as the first row or one person at a table at a time.

Snacks will be available for elementary students at no cost to our families.

<u>Secondary</u>

The Phase II dismissal times for the middle and high school remain the same as they have been since September. There will not be an allocated time or space for snacking for secondary students.

Will lunch be served during in-person instruction during Phase II?

Lunch will not be served during Phase II, however, we will continue providing lunches for any family that would like this service. This is a free service to all students for the remainder of this school year and we are happy that we will be able to continue to provide this during Phase II.

For elementary students, snacks will be available for students at no cost to our families.

What subjects will be taught with the increased schedule at the elementary school?

At the elementary school level, our in-person instructional program has primarily focused on English language arts and mathematics. With the increase in on-site learning time, social studies and science classes will be taught in school as well as your child's special area classes. We are also committed to finding time to have students play, collaborate, and socialize with their peers throughout the day.

Secondary schedules will continue as they are, with further details shared by building administration.

Will all classrooms still be socially distanced at 6 feet?

In every instance possible, classroom seating will be distanced at six feet. When in-person learners increase, some classrooms may be distanced at less than 6 feet. Plexiglass will be used during instances in which spacing is reduced.

Have the quarantine periods changed?

Quarantine times for close contacts are not changing with the start of Phase II.

For those who have contracted COVID-19 previous and for those who are vaccinated, can the travel advisory quarantine guidance be adjusted?

Travel quarantine periods have changed and were communicated in a notice from the district on March 5, 2021.

The CDC and the Department of Health guidance remains that persons should quarantine after returning from travel, regardless of their vaccination status and/or those who tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 90 days. This is to prevent travelers from spreading variant strains.

Will my child's bus route be different?

Phase II does require that we adjust transportation and our bus routes. In doing so, there will be bus routes that will require consolidation. Any change in your child's bus route will be communicated to you prior to the start of Phase II.

If I elect to come back from the fully remote environment into the hybrid environment, and do not feel comfortable, will I be able to go back?

Our building administrators, teachers, and support staff are prepared to assist any student with their comfort level at school. However, should the student's learning be negatively affected by attending in-person then we will follow the existing procedures to return the student to a fully remote program.

If I say that my child does not want to come back now and wants to come back in the middle of the fourth marking period, can I do so?

All virtual parents at the elementary level were asked to provide written confirmation to the district if their child was going to come back to hybrid learning by March 9. The school district has made in-classroom modifications that have been informed based on this information.

Return dates for later in the 4th marking period will be shared with our community after a successful return takes place this month.

Now that there are more students in the building, will this impact the contact tracing process?

Regardless of population size, the standard and procedure for contact tracing does not change.

Our contact tracing will continue to be thorough and we must understand that with more students in the building, even with masks being worn or the usage of plexiglass desk shields, there is the possibility that we will face the need to conduct tracing for positive cases.

Why can't the students go back all day every day?

Our ultimate goal is to have in-person learning all day every day, but we must ensure that the risks associated with high-capacity instances in the school day, such as the serving and eating of lunch, is mitigated through thoughtful measures.

Will the YMCA continue to offer their before- and after-school programs?

The YMCA will still offer before-care and after-care. Before those areas used by YMCA can be used by our in-house students during the school day, the facilities will be cleaned.

When are teachers out of the building? Can cleaning start earlier?

Teachers will follow their regular contractual times. We ask that all staff leave the building by 3:30 p.m. for secondary staff and by 4:30 p.m. for elementary staff to ensure that the cleaning crews have ample time to complete their thorough cleanings of each school.

Will some sort of Phase II orientation be available to parents and students?

Yes! Secondary principals will offer office hours for parents/guardians prior to the return of fully remote students. Both schools will offer office hours on Tuesday, March 30th: Ramapo Ridge Middle School at 10 AM and Mahwah High School at 11 AM. Details will be communicated by the building principals.

Yes! Elementary building principals will be offering office hours prior to the start of Phase II. This will allow for parents and students to receive information about what our in-person learning program will look like, and will address any programmatic and building-specific questions that parents and/or students may have.

How will the collection of technology be handled at the end of the year?

Building administrators will develop their plans for returning materials at the close of the year and advise students and families as we get closer to the end of the year.

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Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

March 2, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

March is Women's History Month, and in honoring women's contributions to the world within our school district, we want to acknowledge those who have paved the way for our females and young women and, in fact, all of us at Mahwah schools.

We celebrate Dr. Jill Biden, former Mahwah resident and educator who is a champion for community college education. In reflecting on those who have made a significant impact, we remember Florence Nightingale, who was a British nurse, social reformer, and statistician best known as the founder of modern nursing. It is through her work that influenced the quality of care that we know today.

Mary Cassatt, the only American artist associated with Impressionism, helped to introduce European art to major collectors in the United States. Her work is rife with metaphor and symbolism that reflects society of her time. Meanwhile, Katherine Johnson, a mathematician, was called upon to assist in navigating the complexity of the orbital flight in NASA's 1962 mission. Currently, Jazlyn Carvajal is a leader in STEM and promotes Latinas in the field.

And her poetry inspired many, as Maya Angelou's beautiful tropes should remind us all of the power of language in "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."

We highlight Hattie Caraway, the first woman elected to the United States Senate. We applaud siblings, Susan and Anne Wojcicki, for both of their accomplishments in business, as a CEO and co-founder of 23andMe and Google's first marketing manager, respectively.

Women's contributions are not constrained to this singular page, but have a vast mark on our history. For our girls and the young women in our school district, we look forward to your own accomplishments and contributions to the world in the years to come!

Lastly, we acknowledge all women in our personal and professional lives who help to shape who we are becoming: Our aunts, sisters, mothers, and grandmothers. Their dedication to us is - at times - greater than that for themselves.

Sincerely,

Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
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March 24, 2021

Dear Mahwah Families,

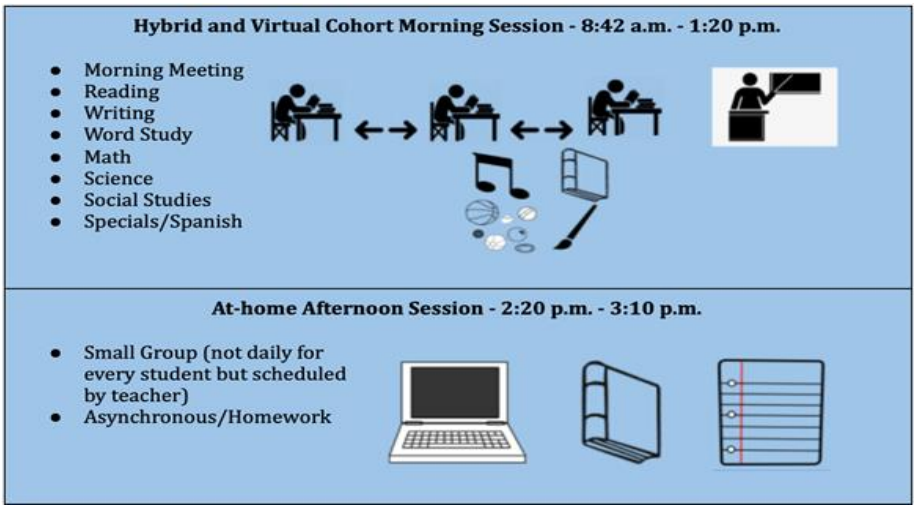
It is with great excitement that we announce more plans regarding Phase II of our instructional program at the elementary school level. Although we are still masked, and we are still socially distanced, we are still together. Just like all other phases in our lives, we know that this time together will be new yet the same as it ever was.

Phase II has already begun for our secondary program. The hallways are abuzz and our hybrid students are all back together! Our teachers were able to welcome our students back with enthusiasm, and that energy remains over at Ramapo Ridge and Mahwah High School. We are excited, especially for our seniors, who will have the opportunity to close out the school year as a unified cohort.

March 29 will mark the day for our even greater return of increased time in school. In those coming days, our elementary school hybrid students will be able to join each other, as both our a.m. and p.m. cohorts will be together as one!

We await the sounds of a typical school day for our younger students as is being observed currently in our middle school and high school. More students in school means more opportunities for laughter, more opportunities to make connections, and more opportunities for learning from one another.

In today's town halls with building principals, many of you had the opportunity to hear information specific to your child's instructional program. Please find the structure of your child's school day below:



*Times are approximate, based on your school's specific schedule aligned with transportation.

All updated information regarding Phase II's instructional program can be found on our district's re-entry website. Additionally, each of our elementary schools have devised a reopening plan, which has been shared with you by our building principals. These building-specific reopening guides are also available for your viewing on our Phase II website.

We know that there is more to communicate to you about (including Virtual Wednesdays, visits for our virtual students, fun days such as field day, and opportunities for longer school days), but for today, we simply want to **enjoy this moment** that, effective March 29, both secondary and elementary students are in school for more time and longer days.

A Message from Our Building Principals!

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

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March 25, 2021

Good afternoon, Mahwah Community,

As we begin Phase II at the elementary level, it is important to assess all aspects of instruction. Last week, the secondary students transitioned into Phase II learning by combining cohorts and attending school daily. Our elementary students will begin Phase II on Monday, March 29, where our cohorts will be combined and students' in-person instructional time will be increased. Our teachers and our administrators are proud of this increase of in-school learning!

We have been able to utilize Virtual Wednesdays in a number of ways since the start of the school year, including deep cleaning, time for collaboration/planning, as well as time to learn through various professional learning experiences. As we have stated from the beginning of the school year, our ultimate goal is to have students come to school and learn through an in-person instructional model.

And an adjustment to the existing Virtual Wednesday can accomplish just that.

The students will be coming to school for the remainder of the year, on each day. On the following days, April 21, May 5, May 19, and June 2, our students will come to school for their regular in-person instructional day, but the afternoon will be utilized for teachers to take part in professional development experiences, collaborate on student achievement with their colleagues, and plan for future instruction as they have done thus far this school year. This means that office hours and small-group instruction will not take place only on these days.

We feel that this adjustment allows for the students to continue to learn in school each day, while also providing the time for teachers to collaborate, intentionally plan, and grow their craft as we continue refining and adjusting our instructional deliveries to successfully navigate through these unique times.

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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March 30, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

We are now at a point in our Phase II where your accurate and honest reporting regarding possessing symptoms and the attestation form, close contacts, positive test results, and travel is the only way that we can keep our school buildings open. We are learning of neighboring districts requiring full-school closures and our CDC Director, Rochelle Walensky, is projecting another round of increased COVID positivity due to travel.

As spring break approaches, we would like to emphasize the importance of disclosing any travel plans to any area outside of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Delaware. Travel has the potential to spread variants that are resistant to vaccinations or previous positivity.

Keeping your plans a secret or refusing to adhere to our district's travel guidelines serve no positive purpose for our staff members' and students' wellness or education. If you have plans to travel during spring break, you must advise your building's school nurse and building leadership so that your return can be properly documented.

The district has supported your request for decreased quarantine time as related to travel by accepting the NJDOH guidance on the ability to test back into our in-person instructional program via a shorter quarantine period; however, we will not be able to remain open for in-person learning if we do not remain honest in our reporting regarding travel plans.

We ask that you refer to our travel advisory guidance in a previous notice, shared with you on March 5, 2021.

Respectfully,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

May 7, 2021

Dear Mahwah Families,

We continue to show improvement with our overall district wellness. In response to our current data, we are able to offer adjustment to the district's quarantine status determinations, all of which is supported by the New Jersey Department of Health recommendations.

While we have recently entered into the "yellow" so that our current risk level is deemed to be "moderate". We are currently not changing the quarantine time for close contacts who are not previously positive or vaccinated; this will remain at 14 days. This will be reviewed after our data has sustained its level for some weeks.

Significant to this document is the change by which COVID-19 positive persons may now return to school 10 days post-positive COVID-19 test result, as long as remaining symptom- and fever-free (fever-reducing medication free) for 24 hours prior to return. However, families, students, and staff who are currently engaging in quarantine must adhere to the guidance given at the time of exposure.

Fully vaccinated and previously documented positive individuals must remain vigilant by monitoring themselves for exposure and symptoms. The use of the district attestation form is a tool by which you can properly assess your wellness to be in school. In the event that a fully vaccinated or previously documented positive person develops symptoms, please seek medical guidance.

Please confirm with your school nurse regarding any issues related to overall wellness and, in particular, matters related to COVID-19. Decisions made by the district nursing staff and administration regarding quarantine are final and any recommendations made by building nursing staff must be adhered to, respected, and acted upon.

We will continue to require the use of masks in all settings including during outdoor activities, practice social distancing, encourage proper hand-washing/sanitizing, completing the attestation form, and contact tracing in all school settings.

Quarantine Status Update
May, 2021

Status	Exposure	Outcome
Fully vaccinated*	Close contact	Remaining asymptomatic no quarantine is required except if symptomatic. If symptoms develop, isolate and seek medical evaluation and testing.
Fully vaccinated*	Awaiting COVID-19 test results not due to personal illness	May attend school and report to work.
Fully vaccinated*	Family member awaiting test or COVID-19 positive	Remaining asymptomatic no quarantine is required. If symptoms develop, isolate and seek medical evaluation and testing.
Previously reported positive (clinically recovered) within past three months**	Close contact	Quarantine not required.
Previously reported positive (clinically recovered) within past three months	COVID-19 positive test	Not required to quarantine except if symptomatic.
Previously reported positive greater than past three months	Close contact	14 day quarantine required.

Status	Exposure	Outcome
Unvaccinated or not previously reported positive	Close contact	14 day quarantine required.
Unvaccinated or not previously reported positive residing with a newly diagnosed positive person (able to isolate)	Close contact	14 day quarantine required.
Unvaccinated or not previously reported positive residing with a newly diagnosed positive person (unable to isolate)	Close contact	24 day quarantine required. 10+14 =24 (continuous contact)
Unvaccinated or not previously reported positive residing with a symptomatic person	Residing with a person with symptoms	Return to school after person with symptoms tests negative.
Unvaccinated or not previously reported positive with symptoms	Symptomatic and tested	Return after proof of negative PCR Positive PCR requires a 10 day quarantine from positive test taken and symptom free/fever free for 24 hours prior to return.
Unvaccinated or not previously reported positive residing with someone awaiting a test	Residing with a person awaiting a COVID-19 test	Return to school after proof of housemates negative test.
Unvaccinated or not previously reported positive	COVID-19 positive test	**10** day quarantine from positive test taken and symptom free/fever free (medication free) for 24 hours prior to return.

Travel

Status	Exposure	Outcome
Fully vaccinated*	Domestic travel	No quarantine or test required after travel.
Fully vaccinated*	International travel	Get tested 3-5 days after returning and **no** quarantine required. You may attend school while awaiting testing results.
Previously positive (clinically recovered) within past three months**	Domestic travel	**No** quarantine or test required after travel.
Previously positive (clinically recovered) within past three months**	International travel	**No** quarantine or test required after travel.
Unvaccinated or not previously positive	Domestic and International travel	Get tested 3-5 days after returning, stay home and self-quarantine for **7** days post travel even if the test result is negative. If not tested stay home and quarantine for **10** days post travel.

Regardless of your vaccination status, the district will always inform close contacts when identified.

Quarantine timeline is based upon the positive test date and not the start of symptoms

In all cases, it is essential to monitor yourself for symptoms. Do not attend school if you are unable to answer the attestation form and meet that criteria.

Proof required

*Proof of vaccination card provided to school nurse. "Fully vaccinated" means confirmation of first and only for Johnson and Johnson, or both doses administered for Pfizer and Moderna and the date on which you are fully vaccinated. Two weeks post the last administered dose deems a staff member fully vaccinated.

** Previously positive must document:

- Name of patient, date of test, physician or location of testing, and clearly denote a positive test.

- Rapid tests will only be accepted to denote a positive test.
- Negative PCR is required to test back from travel advisory.

We retain the right to adjust this guidance based on individual or cohort circumstances, inclusive of information gathered related to COVID-19 regional transmission risk levels and our community's overall wellness data.

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May 18, 2021

We remain focused on ensuring that we create a learning environment that safeguards our staff and students against COVID-19. The Center for Disease Control affirmed that face coverings remain a critical tool especially for those unvaccinated in the fight against COVID-19, reducing the spread of the disease, mainly when used universally within communities and schools. The means of transmission of the virus has not changed; we remain in the "moderate transmission zone," and the fact that our current elementary student population remains unvaccinated and our middle and high school students are just recently being offered a vaccination, requires that we move forward with any change in a careful and deliberate manner. As the weather continues to improve, there are opportunities for our staff and students to take part in more learning and social experiences outside, and we would like to be able to offer our students the opportunity to take mask-breaks.

The district administration met with our partners of Hackensack Meridian, "Keeping American Safe'' experts, medical consultants, nursing staff, building administration, and physical education teachers to discuss masking outdoors. The abovementioned experts support our thoughts about the benefits of outdoor experiences. We know that it is proven that taking part in activities outside where there is an opportunity for fresh air circulation is another mitigating factor to decrease the spread of COVID-19.

We are extremely fortunate that Mahwah schools possess a vast amount of outdoor space for our students and staff to take part in teaching and learning activities,as well as opportunities for eating and socializing in the fresh air. With the weather improving and temperatures increasing, we need to be cognizant of mask-use outdoors while exposed to increased temperatures and humidity. As long as social distancing and 6 feet distance can be maintained, the district is making the following changes to outdoor masking during the school day:

Outdoor mask-breaks will be coordinated into our instruction and will be teacher-initiated based upon student needs and the ability to meet the distancing requirements:

1. Masks can be dropped temporarily by students who are outdoors when the distance between them is 6 feet or greater.
2. Masks will be removed if aerobic activities are taking place, while ensuring that this can be done with students being 6 feet apart or greater. The mask can come down temporarily and then be placed back upon completion of the aerobic outdoor activity.
3. Snacks can be eaten, and masks can be removed while outside with the distance expectations of 6 feet or more.
4. Class can be conducted and masks can be removed temporarily while outside with the distance expectations of 6 feet or more.

To prevent an issue with soiled masks, we ask that you provide your child with an additional mask to have in the event that it is needed.

These mask adjustments are taking place only during supervised outdoors activities. Staff, students, and members of the community are required to continue to wear their masks when walking around the campus or school building and while walking to and from the school bus or cars.

The opportunity to temporarily remove masks while outside during the school day is a personal choice, and is being offered to all students in the experiences mentioned above. Staff members that are not vaccinated are encouraged to wear masks at all times.

Activities outside of the school day, including sports, require that the district follow NJSIAA guidelines for competitions and practices that occur after the instructional day. At this time, Mahwah is maintaining our requirement that spectators who are unable to distance themselves 6 feet from any other spectator or athlete must wear a mask. Spectators who are able to distance 6 feet are invited to use a temporary mask-break while viewing the event.

Current means by which we determine the actuality of a close contact requires that we continue to move forward with caution for both indoor and outdoor activities. We ultimately do not want to have to cancel or change end-of-the-year experiences based upon an issue of students being deemed close contacts or due to a rise in transmission. Every decision is made based upon what is best to maintain the safety and well-being of all our students and staff.

We are committed to ensure that our students are able to experience all that the schools have to offer this year. We are creating and reinstating end-of-the-year ceremonies and rituals for the students, staff, and families to enjoy. These celebratory experiences can be held as a result of the hard work and commitment of our community during this most unique school year! These experiences are anchored in our focus to ensuring that the social-emotional well-being of our students is continually supported. The logical adjustments to our wellness protocol are made to help increase the likelihood of closing out this year, and making such celebrations a reality for our collective school community!

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION
60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Dennis M. Fare
Assistant Superintendent

Michael DeTuro, Ed.D.
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Kyle J. Bleeker
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

May 24, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

We haven't done this in more than a year, and maybe we are a little bit out of practice, but we know that our staff and students can rise to the occasion.

> This is certainly the moment we have been waiting for, preparing all aspects of our school program to culminate in this final piece!

As previously announced at our May 16 Board of Education meeting, on June 2 and June 9 for our elementary schools, and on June 16 and 17 for our secondary schools, we will pilot the experience of serving and eating lunch in all schools.

Our school hours will remain the same, due to the amount of changes in school schedules for not only the staff and students at school, but to not disrupt the routines that have already been well-established for our families in the community as well. We know that this experience is possible within the confines of our existing schedule, while providing us with valuable information to prepare for what lunch will look like next year with a full-day schedule. We will rehearse, get the cobwebs off our cafeterias walls, and use this experience to create our plan for the all-in-and-all-day school year of 2021-2022 that will be our soon-to-be reality!

In preparation for this pilot, our principals thoughtfully wrote "the script" so that every student will have the opportunity to partake in these rehearsals. Our elementary schools and the Ridge will also participate in recess. And after careful consideration for our menu on these days, Pomptonian, our food services provider, is also ready with an enticing "grab-and-go lunch."

To order lunch, we ask that you complete this lunch survey **by Thursday, May 27** so that our food services and school buildings are prepared for the serving of lunch well before our dedicated lunch dates!

Elementary Schools (Grades K-5)	Secondary Schools (Grades 6-12)
Wednesday, June 2 Wednesday, June 9	Wednesday, June 16 Thursday, June 17

Additional building-specific information will be sent to you prior to the above scheduled dates!

We are encouraged about the district taking the next step in our journey and looking forward to returning to our regular schedule, pre-pandemic, in September 2021.

We also thank you for your ongoing support and patience during these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

November 4, 2020

Dear Parents,

While most of our communication is brief and written about specific single topics, today we want to take the opportunity to tell you more.

The year is in motion and we see that the students, you, and our educators have found a routine within this change that lets us know that our community can adapt and find our momentum within any new challenge.

The months of September and October became the time in which we watched and listened as the return plan was actually implemented with our staff and students. We knew that the document developed with our taskforce committees would need to be revisited often and it was only through day-to-day of just working through this plan that we could see and hear about the changes that needed to subsequently be made.

Most of the changes are taking place as soon as we learn of a need for adjustment. We have made revisions to various aspects of our return plan in all areas that were addressed by the original stakeholders' cohorts.

To date, we have 1846 students enrolled in our hybrid program and 911 students who are fully remote.

Our community has stepped up and we are at a near-perfect completion rate on our attestation forms; please stay diligent with documenting your child's wellness and communicating with your school nurse regarding any matters of health and wellness. Remember to continue to keep your child home if he/she is unwell and stay diligent to his/her wellness medical appointments.

Instructionally, we have set in motion the return to hybrid for families that have requested and we welcome those students back into our schoolhouses.

Teachers and administrators continue to collaborate on curriculum and we believe that they found the balance of implementing the critical skills for each grade level, and through our current models, we are instructing in a way so that essential knowledge is being taught to our students.

Modified cleaning protocols included adjusting the cycle for touch-point cleanings. After engaging in the regular day routine, we revamped cleaning procedures for bathrooms, desks, chairs, and door handles while students were in session and so that we caused the least amount of interruption for learners and the custodial staff. Our cleaning and disinfecting between morning and afternoon session schedules was modified after teachers advised us of needed changes. Our end-of-the-day campus cleaning routine was adjusted to allow for teachers to use their rooms at the end of the day. Any adjustment or change stayed true to our commitment to maintain cleanliness as a mitigating factor.

We are meeting with medical stakeholders this week and next week to determine the feasibility of maintaining both educational programs (hybrid and fully remote). By reviewing our wellness information, inclusive of township, county, and state COVID-19 data in an ongoing fashion, we will be determining if there is a need to consider closing in anticipation of travel and close contact during the holidays within the months of November and December. This medical information, along with the review of surrounding school districts' adjustments to their own calendars and plans, will become part of our guidance in our next instructional phase. Should our calendar be changed, you will be provided with advance notification.

Lastly, we are currently reviewing the data that we have as a result of staff and parents submitting their thoughts on our reopening phase. We will share this data with everyone and we will use this data to support our decisions in the coming weeks and months ahead.

As we have previously shared, with every adjustment and pivot, we remain optimistic for our future. Again, a heartfelt thank-you for staying this course with us.

Respectfully,

Mahwah Administrative Team

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

November 18, 2020

Dear Mahwah Community,

On November 25, 2020, our school district will be on a half-day schedule for our Virtual Wednesday. This Wednesday leads into our Thanksgiving Day break.

Your building principal will be in touch with you regarding your building's plans for this day.

We are nearing our completion of our 50th day of school! During times like these, incremental celebrations serve as inspiration and fuel for the days, the weeks, and the months ahead. While we normally celebrate the 100th day of school, this acknowledgement is worthy of note. As we think back to August and the questions that lingered over the unknown of reopening, we are here and we made it ***together***!

…and the only way we could have done this together is through the connections that we share and our collective commitment to our students.

During this season of gratitude, allow us an opportunity to extend a heartfelt appreciation for your support, your dedication, and your commitment to our successful September opening, our day-to-day maintenance of instruction in the months following, and the bright moments ahead in the 2020-2021 school year.

We are thankful for ***you***.

#MahwahConnects

Sincerely,

Mahwah Administrative Team

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

November 24, 2020

Dear Mahwah Families:

The Mahwah Public Schools will remain open and will continue with our hybrid model after our Thanksgiving break.

The Mahwah school community, comprising of staff, parents, community partners, and the Department of Health continue to work relentlessly to keep the schools open with safety of staff and students of primary concern.

We are maintaining our work to remain open, but your continued help is needed as we adhere to the most recent published guidelines provided by the Department of Health.

With the reality that the Department of Health has labeled Bergen County as "high risk," we are making significant changes to our existing practices regarding student and staff health to ensure that safety remains our priority. These changes come as a result of the new guidance issued to the district by the New Jersey Department of Health (11/19/2020).

New Protocol

- Do not send your children to school if they exhibit any symptoms on the district's attestation form.
    - **Our staff will send your child to the nurse if any visible symptoms are present, regardless of the completed COVID-19 questionnaire, and after our nurses' assessment you will be required to pick your child up immediately.**
    - **We will be treating anyone who has COVID-19-like symptoms as a probable case.**

- If someone in your household is being tested for COVID-19 due to illness, students within your home must also stay home until the COVID-19 test result is received.
    - **Siblings of student/family member who has symptoms, and has COVID-like symptoms, will be excluded from school until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result.**

- Parents/guardians and staff must notify the school nurse of illness and known exposure to COVID-19.
    - **Anyone absent from school will be contacted by staff and questioned as to potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days.**

- An alternate diagnosis will not be accepted for a return to school when individuals still meet the COVID-19 exclusion criteria.

    - **Students and adults with COVID-19 compatible symptoms will be excluded until they have a negative COVID-19 test, or have met the criteria for discontinuing home isolation (isolate for at least 10 days since symptoms first began and 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms).**

- If we learn that you or your child has traveled within a state listed in New Jersey's travel advisory, and you do not adhere to the quarantine rules and your child attends school, the district will enact Board of Education Policy 8451, Control of Communicable Diseases, and your child will be excluded from school to complete a mandated quarantine.

Continuation of Existing Protocol

- Complete your daily attestation form.
- Continue to wear masks.
- Do not attend school if unwell.
- Do not participate in high-risk activities, inclusive of large gatherings where the potential for transmission of this virus is likely.

To assist us in accomplishing this herculean task, we ask that you provide us with honest and accurate data and information to guide our decisions that will dictate our course. Ultimately, this international pandemic requires all of us to do our part. Doing our part means keeping our kids safe, but this cannot be done unless we remain truthful.

While we have determined that a closure is not warranted at this time, the circumstances are ever changing. If the decision to close is made by us, then we will give you as much lead time and notice as we can.

Please know there are other forces impacting our decision about closing and continued openings. These factors may influence our need to go fully remote, so that we can continue to deliver a comparable quality educational program to our students. One factor is the adverse impact our current conditions may have on available staffing, with another factor being the COVID-19 activity rate within our schools, whether it is caused by internal or external influences.

We are monitoring health data and positive contacts of our staff, students, citizens, and surrounding communities.

We ask for your continued cooperation and patience, as our goal continues to be to keep schools open safely and to follow our instructional program - as long as we are able.

Sincerely,

Leonard Fitts, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

October 23, 2020

Dear Mahwah Community,

On Wednesday, October 21, 2020, the Center for Disease Control redefined the meaning of close contact. The New Jersey Department of Health provided the district with guidance, effective October 23, 2020.

The change made is regarding the definition of a close contact, which is used in our contact tracing process, and has been originally defined for our community through a previous e-mail. The change is regarding the length of time associated with exposure and the time interval used to assess the potential exposure.

Previously, a close contact was someone within six feet of an infected person for 10 consecutive minutes, with or without the wearing of a mask.

The new definition of a close contact is exposure to a COVID-positive person during the 24-hour period in which the person is considered infectious:

- Within 6 feet
- 15 minutes or more of cumulative close contact
- 2 days before illness onset for the COVID-positive person (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection)

For example, someone could be considered a close contact by meeting the 15-minute window if he/she spends three five-minute intervals within 6 feet of a positive case. Needless to say, it is clear that, while we have many mitigating factors in place, this updated criteria of close contact could occur more readily.

The new definition still requires an analysis on a case-by-case basis, inclusive of other factors reviewed, such as total proximity, duration, presentation of the infected person with or without symptoms, and if there was a presence of respiratory aerosols, and other environmental factors.

We will have to see over time what this will mean when there is a COVID-19 positive case in our schools. We do know that the change in criteria is significant. We do not know if this will cause more classes or whole schools to shutter for the mandatory 14-day quarantine.

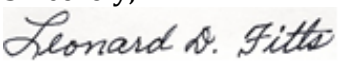
We asked that our in-school students and staff continue to follow our safety practices of:

- Completing the daily attestation form
- Staying home when unwell or having symptoms
- Maintaining safe distances
- Continuing to wash or sanitize hands
- Wearing your mask in school and out of school when around other people

It is essential that we continue to remain socially distant as often as possible in all aspects of our lives.

Our caution around health and safety exists to keep us vigilant, and we are reminded that our individual responses keep are collective community safe.

Sincerely,



Leonard Fitts, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

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Director of Special Services

March 12, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

March 13, 2021 marks one year that we quietly packed up our classrooms in anticipation of two weeks in-home learning and we fully believed that, after the brief hiatus, we would return to school. The reality is that, within this past year, New Jersey has lost over 23,000 citizens to COVID-19. We have emerged from the other side of the past year more conscientious of the conditions of each person's personal life and the importance of community when facing difficult tasks. We are grateful to the parent support during in-home learning, throughout the past year, and in the course of our return planning.

Having begun the transition to the other side of life post-COVID, we presented to our community the Phase II return plan at the March 3 Board of Education meeting.

Sharing with you our progress in relation to our Phase II preparatory work, please review the following information:

- Elementary programs will begin the combined in-school program, including the return of fully-remote students, effective Monday, March 29, 2021.
    - The fully-remote students are invited to return to our in-person program on March 29.
- Secondary programs, grades 6-12, will return to all hybrid students attending a half-day program five days per week on Monday, March 15, 2021.
    - The fully-remote students are invited to return to our in-person program on April 12.

We are proud to share with you that the district's push for maintaining safe facilities and creating a healthy learning environment for our students led to our participation with Hackensack Meridian's "Keeping America Safe Assist Program," which allows our district leaders access to additional experts in facilities, operations, and medicine, including site visits for evaluation of our facilities and professional development. Representatives from Hackensack Meridian are in the process of reviewing our school district's program, COVID-related and health/wellness policies, and facility-specific protocol - all of which will lead to our opportunity to receive this organization's endorsement.

Building administrators are prepared to answer your questions related to Phase II. Additionally, the FAQ listing the most common questions received are here to offer you more information and answers. You can continue to submit your questions to MahwahReentry@mahwah.k12.nj.us or contact building leaders.

To further assist you and our children during this time, our principals will be hosting office hours/town hall meetings for the purpose of sharing information related to Phase II. This will be an opportunity for our parents to ask questions specific to your child's school building and instructional program. Please find those dates/times below.

Betsy Ross School	March 24 @ 9:00 a.m.
George Washington School	March 24 @ 9:00 a.m.
Lenape Meadows School	March 24 @ 10:00 a.m.
Joyce Kilmer School	March 24 @ 10:00 a.m.
Ramapo Ridge Middle School	March 30 @ 10:00 a.m.
Mahwah High School	March 30 @ 11:00 a.m.
Full-Remote Program	March 24 @ 10:00 a.m.

We remain excited for Phase II, and look forward to having our students back with us!

Sincerely,

The Mahwah Administrative Team

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60 Ridge Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430

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April 6, 2021

Recent CDC and NJDOH guidance, as of April 5, 2021, indicates that quarantine periods for travel have been significantly adjusted or eliminated. Below is the change in guidance that the district is adopting immediately.

In order to meet the criteria for "fully vaccinated," staff and students must submit proof of vaccination card. In order to meet the criteria for "previously positive," documentation must be provided to the school nurse.

Status	Exposure	Outcome
Fully vaccinated*	Domestic travel	No quarantine or test required after travel
Fully vaccinated*	International travel	Get tested 3-5 days after returning and **no** quarantine required
Previously positive (clinically recovered) within past three months**	Domestic travel	**No** quarantine or test required after travel
Previously positive (clinically recovered) within past three months**	International travel	**No** quarantine or test required after travel
Unvaccinated or not previously positive	Domestic and International travel	Get tested 3-5 days after returning, stay home and self quarantine for **7** days post travel even if the test result is negative. If not tested stay home and quarantine for **10** days post travel

In all cases, it is essential to monitor yourself for symptoms. Do not attend school if you are unable to answer the attestation form and meet that criteria.

<u>Proof required</u>

*Proof of vaccination card provided to school nurse. “Fully vaccinated” means confirmation of first and only for Johnson and Johnson, or both doses administered for Pfizer and Moderna and the date on which you are fully vaccinated. Two weeks post the last administered dose deems a staff member fully vaccinated.

** Previously positive must document:

Name of patient, date of test, physician or location of testing, and clearly denote a positive test.

Rapid tests will only be accepted to denote a positive test.

Negative PCR is required to test back from travel advisory.

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Lisa Rizzo
Director of Special Services

September 2, 2020

Dear Mahwah Families,

We are excited to welcome you back in the coming days!

If you have not done so already, please take a look at the following two videos that introduce masks/face-coverings to our elementary students, in particular:

- Behind the Mask
- Behind the Mask, Part II

We recognize that mask/face-covering selection is a very personal yet essential choice in preparation for back-to-school. As you know, the Governor of New Jersey and the school district have mandated the wearing of masks for all staff and students.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) offers the following guidance on wearing a mask:

- Wash or sanitize your hands before putting on your mask.
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face.
- Make sure you can breathe easily while wearing your mask.

Please use the following CDC guidance to inform your decisions as you select your back-to-school masks!



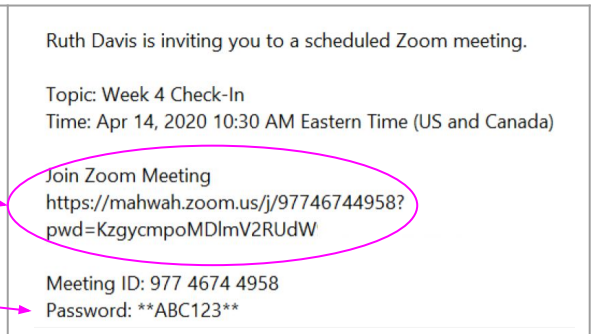
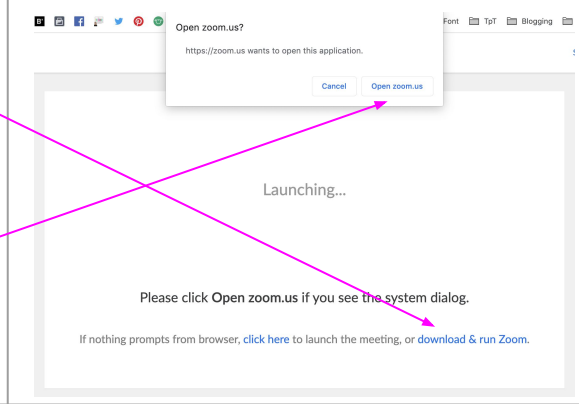
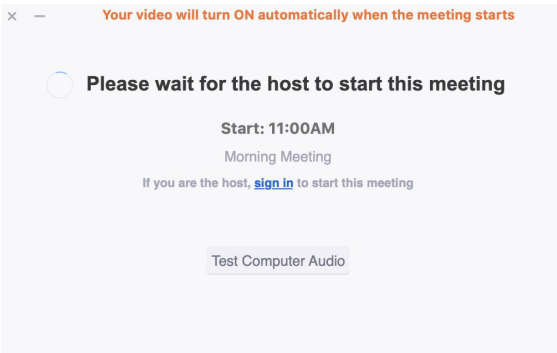
We look forward to seeing you. Even with our masks, we will continue to connect!

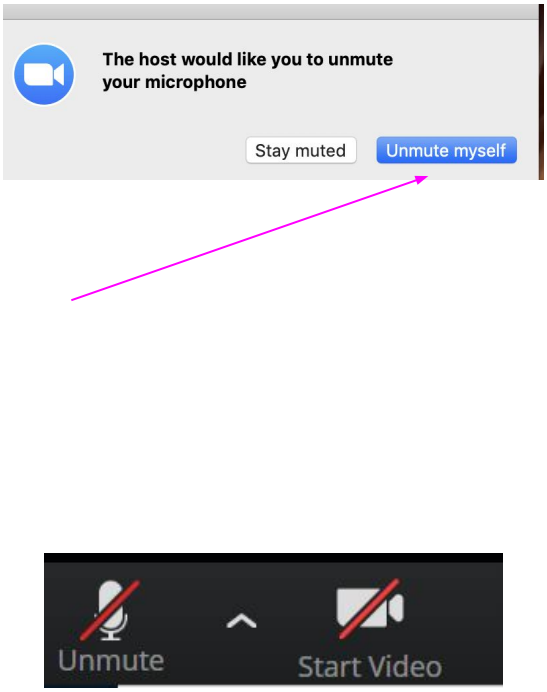
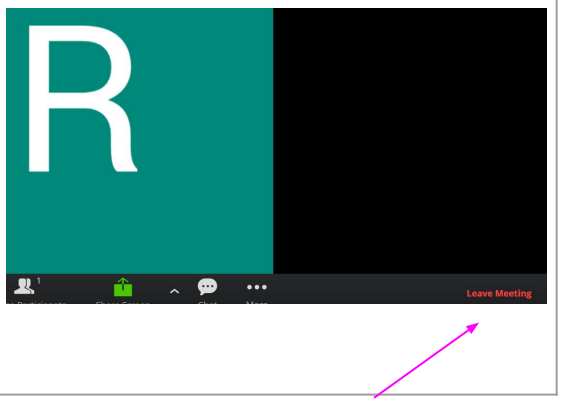
#MahwahConnects

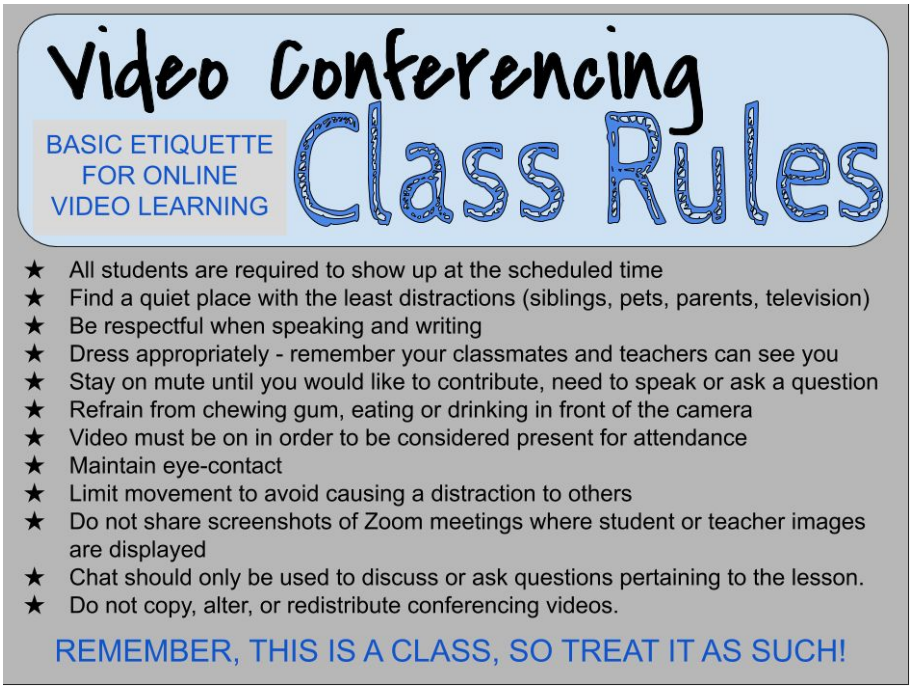
Zoom Directions for Students

FOR COMPUTER USERS: 🎧Headphones help with background noise!

Browser Requirements: Google Chrome 53.0.2785 or higher, Internet Explorer 10 or higher, Microsoft Edge 38.14393.0.0 or higher,, Safari 10.0.602.1.50 or higher, Firefox 49.0 or higher

1.	Click on the meeting link your teacher sends or posts. Be prepared to enter the meeting password, if prompted	
2.	If you are working on a personal device, you will need to click *download and run Zoom*. (from a phone download the app) If you have Zoom downloaded on your computer then click *Open Zoom* Note: this app was pushed out to district devices on April 3, 2020	
3.	You might see a similar message to the one on the right once Zoom has been launched. As soon as your teacher joins the meeting, the virtual room will pop up.	
4.	Most likely your teacher has it set to mute all participants (that's YOU!) when they first join. You will only be able to <u>hear</u> your teacher at this time. She/he will <u>not</u> be able to hear you.	

5.	If your teacher invites you to speak, the message to the right may or may not pop up. If it does pop up click the blue *Unmute Myself* button. **Troubleshooting:** What if my teacher cannot hear me? • Click the microphone icon in bottom-left corner to unmute your mic • Next to the microphone icon, click the ^ arrow to try other microphones. What if my teacher cannot see me? • Click the video icon in the bottom-left corner to start your video. • Next to the video camera, click the ^ arrow to try other cameras your computer may be connected to.	
6.	If you need to leave the meeting early or your teachers says the meeting has come to an end, you will want to exit the room by clicking *Leave Meeting* in the lower right hand corner.	



The Techie Teacher®

Other Helpful Resources

Click PARTICIPANTS to see who's currently in the meeting. The Participants list also gives you access to these options:

Non-verbal feedback icons (if enabled by the host): Places an icon beside your name to quickly notify the host. For example, Raise Hand places the raise hand icon beside your name and simulates a hand raise.



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May 20, 2021

Dear Mahwah Community,

As a result of New Jersey Department of Health guidance (received May 19 and May 20, 2021), this notice replaces any prior communication on travel quarantine guidance.

Please note the adjustment to the travel advisory. Those who **are unvaccinated, and return from travel, are required to test (3-5 days after travel) and quarantine (7 full days from return) or quarantine (10 full days) without testing.**

Domestic travel does not include New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, or Delaware. **These states are exempt from any travel restrictions.**

Travel

Status	Exposure	Outcome
Fully vaccinated*	Domestic travel	No quarantine or test required after travel. Self monitor for any symptoms
Fully vaccinated*	International travel	No quarantine after travel. Get tested 3-5 days after travel. You may attend school while awaiting results Self monitor for any symptoms

Previously positive (clinically recovered) within past three months**	Domestic travel	No quarantine or test required after travel. Self monitor for any symptoms
Previously positive (clinically recovered) within past three months**	International travel	No quarantine or test required after travel. No testing needed Self monitor for any symptoms.
Unvaccinated or <u>not</u> previously positive	**Domestic travel**	**<u>Get tested 3-5 days after returning</u>, stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days post travel even if the test result is negative. If not tested, stay home and quarantine for <u>10</u> days post travel.**
Unvaccinated or <u>not</u> previously positive	**International travel**	**<u>Get tested 3-5 days after returning</u>, stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days post travel even if the test result is negative. If not tested, stay home and quarantine for <u>10</u> days post travel.**

In all cases, it is essential to monitor yourself for symptoms. Do not attend school if you are unable to answer the attestation form and meet that criteria.

<u>Proof required</u>

*Proof of vaccination card provided to school nurse. “Fully vaccinated” means confirmation of first and only for Johnson and Johnson, or both doses administered for Pfizer and Moderna and the date on which you are fully vaccinated. Two weeks post the last administered dose deems a staff member fully vaccinated.

** Previously positive must document:

- Name of patient, date of test, physician or location of testing, and clearly denote a positive test.

- Rapid tests will only be accepted to denote a positive test.

We retain the right to adjust this guidance based on individual or cohort circumstances, inclusive of information gathered related to COVID-19 regional transmission risk levels and our community's overall wellness data.