

Dear Herricks School District Families,

Happy Monday! I hope this email finds you all doing well and that the summer has been both relaxing and wonderful. I hope everyone made time to reconnect with loved ones, pursue personal interests and make memories with their children. My family and I enjoyed our summer with one of the highlights being a trip to St. Louis and Chicago to visit new baseball stadiums and see our beloved Mets play. My son chose this trip as his high school graduation gift and it is hard to believe that in a few days he will be moving into his dorm to begin the next phase of his educational journey.

We are so excited to welcome the children back on Wednesday, August 31, 2022 for the first day of the 2022 - 2023 school year. To help ensure a smooth and seamless start to the school year, I wanted to share the following important updates with you:

Health and Safety Update

As we prepare to begin this school year, we are also entering a new phase of the pandemic with many of the previous restrictions being relaxed or lifted completely. In fact, for the first time since 2019, we are planning for a “typical” school year without any social distancing restrictions, COVID testing expectations or mask mandates. Of course, the health and safety of our students, staff and families remains our highest priority. Last week NYS released an update outlining the guidelines for the upcoming school year ([you can see it here](#)). What does that mean for us here in Herricks? Here are the most critical pieces of information for our school community...

- *Masks will be optional.*
- *If a student tests positive for COVID, they are expected to isolate for 5 days and if they are able to return to school on day 6, they are expected to wear a mask for days 6 - 10;*
 - *Students must be fever free for 24 hours and symptoms must be improving in order to return to school after the 5 day isolation period.*
- *If a student is a close contact of someone who has tested positive, it is recommended that they wear a mask for 10 days after potential exposure. It is also recommended that they test on or after day 5 (or sooner if symptoms develop).*
 - *Siblings of positive students are not required to stay home unless they are not feeling well, at which time it is recommended that they stay home.*
- *At this time there is no option for remote learning.*

Moving forward, we will maintain our thorough cleaning protocols, all of our District’s HVAC units have been cleaned, filters are being upgraded to recommended MERV, and controls have been set to maximum outside airflow. We realize this is a dynamic situation so we will continue to monitor COVID 19 and share any updated guidance from the state as we receive it.

Facilities Update

It has also been a busy time for our hardworking facilities team with a variety of projects that will continue to enhance our facilities district-wide. These projects include the ongoing renovation of the HHS auditorium, library renovations at both the HMS and HHS, continued painting of classrooms, and replacing of sink basins at our elementary schools. A special thank you to our entire facilities team for their work this summer. I cannot wait to welcome our students back to school because our buildings are looking spectacular and are ready for the meaningful learning experiences that will soon be unfolding in our classrooms.

Staffing Update

This has been a busy summer for our team in Human Resources as we onboarded approximately 30 new members of our instructional staff. All new instructional staff members joined us for three days of New Teacher Orientation last week where we explored a number of topics to help prepare them for their work with our students. We are excited to work with and learn from our new colleagues.

Curriculum Update

A number of summer programs took place in our schools this year that engaged, challenged and supported our students. From our ESY program to our Summer Music Program to our Virtual Summer English Writing Program, our students had various meaningful and thoughtful learning opportunities. Many of our teachers have also engaged in a number of curriculum writing projects this summer to help enrich and enhance the learning experiences for our students. We are sure that 2022 - 2023 is going to be an incredible year of learning!

While we will continue to carefully navigate the potential impact of COVID, we will also focus on the academic development of all learners in concert with providing a nurturing school culture that supports the social and emotional needs of our students. My hope is that we will continue to nurture the strong sense of community that permeates all our classrooms and allows our students to show up as their authentic selves and feel a strong sense of belonging. We will also continue to think about how the [“Portrait of a Herricks Graduate”](#) can shape the vision and trajectory of our school community.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information and know that I am very much looking forward to welcoming our students back and getting to know them, and each of you, over the coming weeks and months. I, along with our Board of Education, administrators, faculty, and staff are looking forward to having all of our students rejoin us on August 31, 2022 for what we know will be a wonderful year. It is an incredible honor to serve you as your superintendent and I cannot wait to embark on this journey with you!

Sincerely,

Dr. Tony Sinanis
Superintendent of Schools
Herricks School District