



Florham Park Public Schools
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RE: Ready to Reopen!

Dear **Florham Park Parents/Guardians,**

As I stated to many of you that I have seen while driving through the community and neighborhoods this summer, it has been wonderful “seeing everyone” riding their bikes, walking, and enjoying time with family and friends, while adhering to social distancing norms. The resemblance of some sort of *normalcy* and being able to converse with others (without the use of a computer) has certainly been comforting and welcomed.

I would like to thank so many of you for your input, suggestions, and conversations necessary to move forward with our plans. Our custodial and maintenance crew have been working nonstop to ensure a smooth transition for the staff and students next week. In addition to the custodial/maintenance crew’s normal summer duties, the District had major capital projects being worked on this summer that impacted their normal routine; therefore, we all owe the entire custodial and maintenance crew, and Mr. Infantolino – Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds, a special thank you!

Though additional communication will follow by the administrative team, below are some final updates as we enter the last few days of our summer and officially open to students on September 14th.

General Health and Safety Overview

- As reported out previously, the Department of Education has approved our reopening plan and confirmed that it meets all health and safety requirements, including ventilation guidelines and social distancing protocols. Our classrooms and other spaces reflect these measures, with *specialty* made desk/table shields (that extend past the desk/table) being installed throughout the schools, extraneous furniture removed from classrooms to create more space, markers and signs in hallways to indicate traffic flow, thermometers, and additional precautions. Oscillating fans have been placed in non HVAC classrooms at RMS, interior doors are allowed open (as per the FP Fire Chief) and windows will be opened to increase ventilation.
- The administrative team has sent out a mask/face covering expectation letter to parents indicating our commitment and the importance of students wearing their mask/face covering.

- The New Jersey Department of Health updated its weekly [COVID Activity Level Report](#) (week ending Aug.29th). For the fourth consecutive week, the region covering Morris County is designated as “Low” in terms of virus activity. The case rate for our region was listed as 3.0 per 100,000 people and the percent positivity rate was 1.77%. Again, this is a reminder to continue recommended and best practices!
- Remember, our reopening and the district *remaining* open is both an individual and team effort. It is up to us as individual community members and families, not just a school district, to protect one another from the community spread of the virus. Please continue to follow the recommendations of the Florham Park Health Department and the New Jersey Department of Health. Wear your masks/face covering and adhere to social distancing guidelines. Practice good hygiene and other safety precautions at school and at home, and remind your children of the importance of these practices.
- Several parents have indicated that they were not able to attend the district’s presentation from the August 31st BOE meeting that included Q&A and statements from our Health Officer. The presentation has been placed on our FP Facebook page and also on our [District Announcement Page](#). As always, should you have questions, the administrative team and I are happy to answer your questions to the best of our ability. Below is a quote from our Florham Park Health Officer, from the District’s presentation regarding Florham Park’s specific reopening plan... and note that this is a credit to our administrators (who have worked *countless* hours), staff, pandemic and reopening team, Board of Education, parents and community.

“The Florham Park School District initiated early and extensive action in coordination with the local Health Department to assure a safe and timely opening of the school system. This decisive action resulted in a reopening plan that considered all aspects of public health, with COVID safety precautions for students, faculty and staff as its cornerstone. It acknowledges the deep mental and developmental health concerns in balance with the robust in-person academic program available to those families who desire it. The partnership established with the Health Department has been superior on all counts and should instill confidence moving forward.”

- Mr. Cantisano, FP Health Officer

Instruction

- A special thank you to the administrative team, as well as Mr. Letchinger and Mrs. Meierdierck, for creating and disseminating training videos to our staff to assist with our hybrid model, since we have never provided instruction using a model that incorporates both a live and virtual component. I completely understand that this will not be perfect, and there will be a learning curve for the staff, students and parents, and our staff will do our best to assist! We are a team, we have staff dedicated to tech assistance in each building, as well as additional staff that would be able to assist should an unforeseen situation arise.
- Staff are already in the schools setting up their classrooms and becoming familiar with the tech components, and this will be further addressed during our staff in-service days. Again, it is great to see staff back in the schools!

- This situation is new for everyone, not just Florham Park. There may be challenges that present itself that no one experienced or planned for. That's ok... stay calm, collective and we will work it out together. Remember, the adage - *One Step At A Time!*
- We are 100% staffed to start the year! This is a credit to our administrative team and our staff members. In addition to having creative coverage options within our model, the district was also proactive in hiring additional paraprofessionals for each building to assist, ensured that all of our student teachers have their sub certificates, and we recently approved staff assistants to receive a stipend for using their substitute certificate if needed by administration. These coverages do not even include our substitute pool that will be available, and thank you to the many Florham Park parents and community members that became substitute teachers for the 2020-21 school year to assist!

Again, questions will arise as we move forward. We all will experience opening day *jitters*, even more so now than in years past, but I promise you that with our team of administrators, staff and supportive parents, there is no situation I feel we could not handle ... together. Though I would normally say, "I wish you all a smooth start to the year," I am going to instead say, "I wish you the *smoothest* start to the year as possible."

Sincerely,

Steven Caponegro

Dr. Steven Caponegro

*"No one can whistle a symphony - it takes a whole orchestra to play it." - H.E. Luccock
(Teamwork!)*