



# LITTLE SILVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Little Silver Families,

I apologize for the flurry of letters just before the holiday weekend. In light of the many questions that have been submitted regarding the Student Safety Starter Kit, I felt this update letter was needed.

Although the starter kit was discussed during one or more of the public Board meetings this summer, it is clear that our marketing efforts could have been better. I take responsibility for that and hope this notice will help to answer as many of the questions as possible that have been submitted. For starters, the original idea for the kit grew out of the many offers from parents wanting to know how they could possibly help to ensure that our schools would be able to open for live learning in September. Given the importance of keeping everyone safe and healthy, the thought of including a mask and desk barrier seemed to make perfect sense. In an effort to provide high quality items, we worked with a local vendor who created 3-ply masks that are made of an antibacterial, fluid repellent and washable material. To make the mask even more appealing, the vendor made them in our school colors along with the LS logo.

To help further ensure the health of our staff and students, the desk barrier was researched and thought to be an excellent way to add another layer of protection within the classroom setting. Putting this item into place was also discussed during our public Q&A sessions dating back to July. Although the barriers are not required, they do provide an additional level of protection that will help prevent the spread of droplets especially when masks are removed at the elementary level during designated snack time. At the middle school level, where the students will be changing classes and intermixing with different peers, the barriers will help provide the extra level of protection in each of their classes. One important point of clarification is that the students will not be expected to clean the barriers. Our custodians will take care of that critical responsibility each day as part of their cleaning procedures. For this reason, the barriers will remain in both schools and not be taken home each day. Currently, we have enough barriers in place for the student cohorts that will attend school on their designated days. However, the district will receive the remainder of our barriers later this month so that we will be prepared to move into phase 3 of our reopening plan where all students attend school on Tuesday - Friday. My goal is to move our schools to the next phase of our reopening plan as quickly as possible. The best way for that to happen is to make every effort to prevent the spread of the virus and I believe the mask and barrier will help us achieve that goal.

The final item in the starter kit - the tech insurance - should be the easiest issue to address. Knowing that the transition to mandatory tech insurance is part of the district's Strategic Plan, the timing was right to implement this expectation since all students will be carrying their Chromebooks to and from school each day. As a reminder, all children who are not part of the fully remote learning plan are expected to use a district-issued Chromebook. These devices should be taken home each day in order to be ready for the possibility of moving back into phase 1 of our reopening plan where everyone would return to fully remote learning. That type of change could literally occur overnight, so having the devices at home is necessary.



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As a fellow parent, I realize that receiving a \$79 invoice just before Labor Day Weekend was potentially difficult and concerning. However, it is important for everyone to understand that public school budgets for the new school year are required to be created in the winter and submitted for approval at the County level in March. At that time, our district could not have anticipated spending tens of thousands of dollars on all of the measures that have been taken to prepare our schools for a safe reopening this month. The district's budget has been stretched thin in order to cover the costs of items such as the thermal body temperature scanners, upgraded air filters, additional custodial services, and PPE for the staff. While each of these items is considered to be a sound investment in the safety and well being of our staff and students, the reality is that none of these expenses were part of the original 2020 - 2021 budget. In the world of public education, an approved school budget from the spring cannot be changed prior to or during the course of the following school year. As a result, we are hoping that families will see the safety kits as a way to help the district offset some of our financial challenges.

If you or your family are uncomfortable with submitting payment for the entire \$79 cost of the kit, then you will have the ability to modify your payment. Unless your child is starting the year fully remote and not using a district issued Chromebook, the tech insurance is required. The district has invested in the barriers and masks for each student, so your contribution for either or both of those items would be greatly appreciated. However, your decision will not affect your child's ability to attend school starting next week.

Tech insurance - \$23  
Desk barrier - \$48  
Mask - \$8

The Business Office will adjust invoices according to each family's decision regarding the Student Safety Starter Kit. Please continue to use the [lsrestart@littlesilverschools.org](mailto:lsrestart@littlesilverschools.org) to notify the district about your payment decision.

**For all families whose child/children will be attending school in one of the cohorts starting next week, it is imperative that parents/guardians log into the parent portal in Genesis each morning to complete and submit the daily health questionnaire by 7:30 a.m.**

Despite the difficulties associated with reopening schools at this time, all of the staff and I am excited to see the students return to school next week. For now, I wish all of you a happy and healthy holiday weekend!

Respectfully,

Superintendent