



LITTLE SILVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Little Silver Families,

Before we head off for a much needed winter break, I wanted to send out my last official update of 2020. Looking back over the past four months, it is safe to say that this school year has been unlike any other than any of us can ever remember. However, I think it is unfair to immediately think that nothing good has come from this experience so far. As a parent and educator, I believe that the children have developed a greater sense of resiliency and self-sufficiency as they have been working to meet the expectations of learning from home and in school. Hopefully, the children will also have a greater sense of appreciation for all of the little things that are part of the “normal school experience.”

As an observer and evaluator of our instructional process and programs, I can say without hesitation that our staff has developed and refined a wide variety of skills during these challenging times. The level of collaboration and articulation among teachers has been impressive as they have served as support systems and resources for one another. Being asked to instruct and interact with students in the classroom while simultaneously trying to do the same for other students at home has brought an all new meaning to the concept of multi-tasking. At the heart of any successful school district, is a faculty that is dedicated, creative and passionate about their work. Fortunately, the teachers we have in both schools fit that description. I have no doubt that as we move into the second half of this year, the teachers will continue to go above and beyond to meet the needs of our students in order to help them become more confident and successful.

As much as I have been and remain committed to the goal of keeping our schools open for live learning to the greatest extent possible, it is important for me to recognize when adjustments are needed. When our district reopened immediately following Thanksgiving, there was a noticeable and somewhat concerning increase in students and staff that had to quarantine due to positive Covid cases, exposures to people who tested positive and because of family travels. Given the opportunities for all of these things to occur on a larger scale over winter break, there is reason to believe that these data points will only increase again in early January. As a result, the members of our district Covid Team, including our school nurses, unanimously agreed that the safest course of action was to keep all staff and students fully remote during the first week in January. As the nurses pointed out, it typically takes 3-5 days for individuals to develop and exhibit Covid-like symptoms. If everyone is fully remote that first week in January, then anyone (staff or student) who becomes ill or develops symptoms will not negatively impact anyone else in the schools during that week. As much as this may be disappointing news for some, the reality is that we are only talking about four days since Monday's remain fully virtual days in our district. The nurses, Administration, Board of Education and I all believe that this decision will hopefully enable us to keep our schools open to an even greater extent over the long haul. So, just to clarify, the district will open for fully remote instruction for all staff and students the week of January 4-8 and Monday, January 11. Both schools will reopen for in-person instruction on Tuesday, January 12.



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Being on the cusp of 2021 is exciting because I believe that the year ahead comes with the potential for positive change and limitless possibilities. However, I am sure there will be challenges ahead in spite of the calendar change. Knowing the strength and support that exists in our town, I am confident that we will overcome the obstacles that await us and continue to serve as a true model of what a community should be.

My wish is for all of our families to have a wonderful holiday season and a new year filled with good health and happiness.

Respectfully,

Superintendent