



LITTLE SILVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. Michael E. Ettore
Superintendent of Schools
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January 14, 2021

Dear Little Silver Families,

From the beginning of the year, our district has made the commitment to maintain a healthy and safe environment in our schools for staff and students. Our ability to accomplish this goal has helped us tremendously in keeping our schools open to the greatest extent possible. Like most other districts, we have had setbacks along the way that have caused one or both of the schools to discontinue live learning for a period of time. However, when that has happened, our staff and students have proven their ability to transition back and resume in-person learning in a relatively seamless manner.

Back in September, Mondays were designated to be a day of fully virtual learning for everyone. This practice has enabled the teachers to refine their virtual teaching skills and coordinate online resources that could be used on short notice to help enhance their instructional efforts. Additionally, the custodians have used Mondays as an opportunity to develop expanded cleaning practices and protocols that helped to prepare the schools for the remainder of the week. There is no doubt that the decision to have virtual Mondays helped our district to transition back in September into our hybrid phase of learning. After a successful start to the year, the district began to transition students back for a greater degree of live learning. As you recall, our move to Phase 3 of our Reopening Plan was complete by the end of October where we were able to welcome back students into our schools four days each week.

Now that we have moved through the complete holiday season, the time has come for our district to take the next step in our reopening efforts. To be specific, we will be eliminating virtual Mondays starting the week of February 1. Given that next Monday, January 18 is a school holiday, the decision to target February 1 will hopefully give staff and families sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for this schedule change. Just to clarify, everyone will still operate on the early dismissal schedule for live learning followed by a virtual session each afternoon from 1:30-3:00 (PRS) and 1:15-3:00 (MPS). The upcoming transition will result in students being able to attend school for live learning Monday-Friday.

For anyone concerned about this decision, it is important to know that the district is confident that the cleaning protocols that have been established will enable our schools to remain safe and healthy environments for staff and students. The additional custodial staff that was hired back in September has remained in place, and they will continue to serve our district to help ensure the proper levels of cleanliness in our schools.

In terms of Covid data, our district continues to experience the need for individuals to quarantine due to close contact exposures and family members that have tested positive. The administration and school nurses realize those occurrences will likely continue in the coming months. If there is a significant uptick in Covid cases that proves to be potentially dangerous, then the transition back to fully virtual learning will occur to the extent needed. For now, I have full faith and



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confidence in our district's ability to successfully manage the various types of health issues that come our way.

As a reminder, families were given the ability to extend their decision to have their child/children remain fully virtual through January 18. If you fall into this category, then the time has come to decide if your child/children will be returning for live learning as of next Tuesday, January 19 or if they will remain fully remote. If you choose the latter, then the next opt-in date for fully virtual students will be the start of the third trimester, which is Tuesday, March 16. Parents of fully remote students are expected to email either or both principals to make them aware of your decision.

Educationally speaking, I think we would all agree that maximizing the time that teachers and students have in the classroom is critical. Not only will students receive a greater degree of academic support, they will also benefit on a social and emotional level from being back in school on a more frequent basis.

I appreciate the ongoing level of trust, support and collaboration from all of our Little Silver families during these difficult times. Your efforts coupled with the work being done by our amazing staff have enabled our district to continue to shine, despite these challenging circumstances.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael E. Ettore".

Michael E. Ettore
Superintendent