



Dear SKY Family,

This is a difficult time in the life of our community and school. We are being tasked with making decisions based upon what the future holds and the uncertainty of this pandemic trend. Just a month ago the numbers in Florida and Sarasota looked different than they do today or how they will look tomorrow. The big question is what does it look like three weeks from now when we are getting ready to open school and welcome back our students?

In the past few years our education system has changed drastically, with the increase in school security and the final realization of the need for increased mental health support. School security is something you can easily see, we can build stronger doors, hire a Sheriff's officer, and create single entrance points for the building in order to keep students safe. In this case we are preventing something very visible, a threat that is statistically very unlikely, an act that is deliberate and with the intent to do harm and is historically perpetrated by one or two people who need to be stopped.

Our current situation is the opposite. While you can see symptoms, that might be all they are, and the real carrier could be an asymptomatic person showing no symptoms at all. There is no intent, they just want to go about their daily lives and learn, and the population of potential carriers is greatly expanded, and we must look at everyone as a potential carrier of COVID. This is what keeps me up at night. How do we keep our students, staff, and community members safe when we can't see the threat?

The school board is finalizing their plans, and so are we. I wanted to update you on where we are and what we are planning on doing. Here is what we know so far and what our plans are to keep all members of our SKY Family safe and healthy.

- We will open on August 10th, per the Department of Education order 2020-EO-06, and we will be open and available for brick and mortar education five days a week for all students who wish to attend.
- We will also provide remote learning with the same curriculum as in person instruction and the ability for students to interact with their teachers daily. This instruction will be a minimum of five hours a day. This instruction will be done remotely and through different digital platforms, including interactive live video with the teachers.
- We know that for those families choosing to send their student to SKY Academy that we are a safer environment than many other locations due to our small population. With fewer than 300 students, the opportunity to be exposed to COVID is significantly smaller than those schools who have well over 700 students.

For those attending SKY Academy in person:

- All individuals entering the building will be temperature screened prior to gaining access to the front lobby and classroom areas. Temperatures of over 100.4 will not be permitted in the building, and students whose temperature are over 100.4 will need to be picked up by parents/guardians and stay home until they are fever free for 72 hours without medication.
- We are installing 20 touch free hand sanitizer stations throughout the building.
- Teachers will greet all students prior to entering classrooms with hand sanitizer, ensuring that clean hands enter the room.
- Transparent desk shields will be provided for each student that they will take with them from class to class.
- Chromebooks will be assigned to every student and they will carry their Chromebook to each class, eliminating the sharing of devices.
- Deep cleaning will take place each night utilizing the electrostatic mister, which disinfects all surfaces.

- All students riding the school bus will be required to wear face coverings due to the proximity of other students.
- Students will be encouraged to wear face coverings as they transition in the hallways.
- Students will be separated in the cafeteria as best as possible and outdoor seating will be utilized for additional seating.
- The current locker-room setup will not be used at the start of school for changing into PE uniforms, how this process works is still in development.

For those attending SKY Academy through our remote platform:

- A schedule will be created in which students will need to attend a minimum of five hours of instruction each day.
- Student attendance will be taken each class period.
- Students will be assigned a specific time to log into the remote platform in order to actively participate in the class lesson, discussion, and activities. This will be teacher directed and will require students to participate through a remote digital platform (Google meet, Zoom, or another video conference platform).
- Students just like in the traditional school setting will be expected to complete assignments daily.
- Utilizing the platform, students will have the opportunity to interact with their peers and work on group projects.
- The same activities and instruction that take place in the classroom will occur through the remote platform, and the same expectation of student behavior and performance will be required.
- This will not be the same as the 4th quarter. Grades will follow the same structure and expectations as students are accustomed to at SKY Academy.

- Students will have the opportunity to transition back to the building at any point, as long as notice is given so that a proper schedule can be created for the returning student.

The goal is that for all students to seamlessly transition back to the SKY Academy building when families feel comfortable making this change. With the plans in place this transition should be an easy one since the activities done remotely and in class are the same. The teacher will be the same, and the supplemental programs that are used to help drive instruction will be the same.

While this is a challenging and unique time, our focus is centered on two primary issues. First, we want all students, staff, and community members to be safe and healthy and to feel that SKY Academy is doing everything we can to provide an environment in which students can achieve academic success while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Our second focus is to provide a continuity of educational service to all students ensuring that those learning remotely are on the same page as those in class and that transitions are seamless. We know that the future is uncertain and that those who choose to start remotely will return to our school building and vice versa. While this is requiring additional planning and a slight decrease in sleep, we know that this is what is best for all our SKY Family. We look forward to the day when all our SKY Family can get together and celebrate our successes, work through our challenges, and encourage each other to achieve the greatness we know lies within each of us.

Please stick with us during these times. We work hard to provide a solid education and we just earned our 15-year charter renewal. SKY Academy is not the building, it is the amazing staff and students who choose to call SKY Academy home. We can't do this without you. If you have any questions or concerns, please give us a call at 941-999-4775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bailey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Bailey" clearly distinguishable.

John Bailey
Principal
SKY Academy Englewood