EWRSD Community Update-August 17, 2020

Dear EWRSD Community:

I hope this communication finds you and your families in good health. This serves as a brief update regarding the district’s restart and reopening plans.

As indicated in the August 10 update, we were scheduled to host two community forums on August 13 for the purpose of reviewing and highlighting various components of the EWRSD Restart and Reopening Plan that was approved by the Board of Education on August 3. Although this information is currently posted on the district’s website, we felt it was important to provide clarity and address questions from the community. In addition to the two community forums, there was also a Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee meeting on Tuesday, August 11 that provided an overview of the plans regarding the district’s reopening to our Spanish speaking families.

The community forums were organized into two sessions. One for PreK-5 and the other for 6-12, which enabled topics and questions to be addressed by members of the elementary, middle, and high school leadership teams. The presentation from the community forums that took place on Thursday, August 13, can be found here.

Parents who have not yet indicated their child’s educational model of choice (Hybrid In-Person or All Remote), and parents wishing to change their original choice must contact their child’s principal as soon as possible. As we continue our planning process, it is critical for us to have accurate information. For planning purposes, those families who do not provide an educational model of choice, we will consider their child to be placed in the Hybrid-In Person option for the fall.

Something briefly mentioned during Thursday’s community forums, was the announcement made on Wednesday, August 12, by Governor Murphy, regarding Executive Order 175. Among other things, it permits school districts to reopen entirely remotely in September, if they believe there are some hurdles to safely open for in-person instruction at that time. This is a change to the guidance originally included in the NJDOE Road Back plan that was released on June 26, 2020. Executive Order 175 indicates that districts that begin “all remote” must make good faith efforts and “actively strive to address any deficiencies” to resume in-person instruction, and must resume partial or full-time in-person instruction at some point during the fall of 2020.

Although we believe the EWRSD has developed a solid and thoughtful framework to support Hybrid-In Person and All Remote options for the fall, this recent Executive Order serves as a
reminder that we must continually assess the implementation of the plan. It is critical to ensure the necessary health and safety precautions for in-person instruction are in place on the first day of school.

The EWRSD is currently reviewing the following areas which may possibly impact in-person instruction in September:

- **Staff Accommodations:** As we address requests from members of our staff who may need to work from home, due to medical conditions that place them at higher risk for COVID-19, we need to ensure that we have adequate staff present in buildings to monitor students and provide in-person instruction.
- **HVAC Recommendations:** We are awaiting recommendations from an audit of the district's air ventilation equipment and filtration system.
- **PPE:** Although we have acquired and stockpiled the majority of needed PPE items such as cleaning supplies/equipment, masks, thermometers, and signage, we need to ensure that all required materials are in the district as originally scheduled.

**Back to School Information:**
You should expect to receive information from the district and your child’s school during the upcoming days/weeks regarding the following areas:

- Supply Lists
- Orientations for students transitioning to a new school (K, 3rd, 6th, and 9th)
- Technology & Hotspot Distribution
- Class Assignments and Student Schedules (Week of August 24)
- Kidcare Information

I appreciate your continued support and patience as we diligently navigate the restart and reopening process.

Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mark Daniels