



Livingston PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Livingston Public Schools Community:

I hope everyone is enjoying their Winter Break. As we look ahead to our return to school, I wanted to provide you with some important information prior to the holiday weekend:

IMPORTANT SCHEDULE CHANGE - JANUARY 3, 2022 AND FEBRUARY 1, 2022:

In order for us to return from break in a manner that allows for a restart with a solid understanding of the evolving pandemic and ensures we are prepared for challenges that may lie ahead of us:

Monday, January 3, 2022 will now be a “staff only day” for the Livingston Public Schools.

We are planning for LPS students to return to in-person, full-day school on Tuesday, January 4, 2020. The January 3rd “staff only day” will replace the Staff Professional Development Day originally scheduled on February 1, 2022. School will now be in-session for students on February 1, 2022. Please mark your calendars accordingly.

We are aware that the in-service day was originally scheduled on February 1st to provide time off for students to celebrate the Lunar New Year. For this year only, the extraordinary circumstances in which we find ourselves necessitates this schedule change. The 2022 Lunar New Year celebration will remain an excused absence, and we will work with our staff to be sure anyone who is celebrating the holiday is able to do so without penalty. We fully intend to preserve the designation of Lunar New Year as a day off for students on future school calendars.

The staff-only day on January 3rd will provide the staff and administrators time to:

1. Gather important information regarding the health of our school community members;
2. Connect with families and restart contact tracing after vacation;
3. Revisit Covid safety protocols and communicate changes to the community.

We understand that this change will require families to make arrangements for their children on Monday. We apologize for the inconvenience, but believe that this is a necessary step at this time.

REASON FOR THE CHANGE TO THE SCHEDULE:

With the high number of Covid cases recorded over the past weeks, we believe that providing a day to assess our current circumstances, re-examine our Covid protocols, provide time for students to get a Covid test, and begin after-break contact tracing could ultimately help us keep our schools open for in-person instruction.

Last night representatives from the school district met with the Livingston Department of Health, Livingston Physicians Panel, and members of the Livingston Town Council in order to better understand the current situation, and determine how best to move forward. At the meeting, we discussed the expected trajectory of Covid over the next few weeks. The physicians informed us that this new strain is highly contagious, but is generally more mild than previous strains. They predicted that the peak of the latest outbreak would be reached soon, and that the case count should begin diminishing in the next few weeks. The physicians emphasized that we continue our focus on the recommended protocols, and be prepared as this spike in cases continues.

Livingston Public Schools: Empowering all to learn, create, contribute and grow.

WE CONTINUE TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO MAINTAIN IN PERSON SCHOOL:

We know there is no substitute for in-person learning. We have worked tirelessly to open our school for in-person learning because we understand the many educational, social, and mental health benefits of having our students physically in school for learning. We intend to do everything we can to remain open for in-person instruction.

Based on NJDOE's current guidelines, a school district can only provide instruction remotely under very specific circumstances. On an emergency basis a district may consider a temporary transition of affected cohorts to remote learning if a significant number of cases is preventing timely contact tracing and exclusion, and/or the sufficient supervision of students is not possible. Any pivot to remote instruction would be short-term as needed to allow for such issues to be resolved. Our intention is to keep our schools open for in-person instruction as much as possible, but we need to be ready to move to remote instruction temporarily if circumstances necessitate a temporary pivot.

REPORTING CASES AND SYMPTOMS:

If you need to let your school nurse know about your child's or someone in your family's positive case or exposure during the break, please call your school nurse and leave a message on January 3, 2021. Nurses will contact you as soon as possible to provide guidance on your child's return to school. Please be patient and respectful of our nurses and the extremely difficult job they need to do. Our nurses will likely be very busy as we transition back into school next week. If your child is experiencing symptoms on Tuesday, or tests positive for Covid, please keep the child home.

SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL:

In our meeting with the Physicians Panel last night, the following was suggested to help slow the spread of Covid in our schools and community:

1. Social distancing. We will review our distancing protocols and maximize distancing as much as possible when students return on January 4th.
2. Use of surgical or kn95 masks. We learned this week that cloth masks are not as protective with Omicron. Double masking or kn95 masks are now recommended. Kn95 masks are readily available online as are surgical masks.
3. Stay home when you exhibit the symptoms associated with COVID-19 or test positive.

Thank you, as always, for your continued partnership. I wish everyone a happy, healthy, and safe 2022! We are all looking forward to seeing our students on January 4, 2022!

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Block, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools