

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

512 Cedar Street
Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076

Joan V. Mast, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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Ext. 4001 or 4002

July 26, 2020

Dear SPF Community,

On Wednesday, July 22, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood District Restart Committee held its first meeting. Those in attendance included members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood administration, parents, students, faculty, staff, members of the Board of Education and a member of the town council. The goal of the Restart Committee is to advise the Superintendent and the Board of Education in developing a Restart and Recovery Plan that will best fit the needs of Scotch Plains-Fanwood and will ensure that the schools reopen as safely as possible.

The District Restart Committee is made up of experts in air quality, risk-management, virology, and medicine. Among the members are therapists, engineers, doctors, parents, teachers, administrators and BOE members. The Committee subsequently formed sub-committees that discussed ways of meeting the social and emotional needs of students and staff, the processes needed to provide a safe return to a secure school environment, facilities preparations, technology supports, the ongoing dynamics of virtual learning, structures needed at every level to sustain At Home Learning, development of needed policies, the dynamics of communication, and ongoing professional development.

The committee reviewed the results of the July 21st District Reopening Planning Survey. The survey asked parents to identify their preferred model for teaching/learning. The results provided the district with data needed to initiate planning by identifying approximately how many students will be returning and in which one of the three different scenarios. We learned from reviewing 4,883 responses that 20% of our families do not want to send their child back to school at this time and would opt for *At Home Learning*. Also, we learned that the majority of the families prefer a hybrid model where students are divided into two cohorts providing the opportunity for more social distancing.

The committee also discussed models that other districts have released. The majority of the districts are preparing to begin the school year using a hybrid model. The specifics of the hybrid model vary across districts, based upon individual district's bussing needs, classroom space allocation and the network's bandwidth.

The District Restart Committee will continue to meet weekly in an advisory role to ensure the safest possible implementation of the NJDOE guidelines.

Every school in the district has an established Pandemic Response Team to help prepare individual buildings and faculties for the 2020-2021 school year. The schools will provide a weekly update to the District Restart Committee. Communications from the district regarding the overall progress in planning will also occur weekly. We will keep you updated on the details as they unfold. We expect to have a finalized plan by August 7th.

The pandemic is creating many challenges for everyone. We are all working with the same shared goals to provide the best plan possible for our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joan Mast
Superintendent of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools