



PERTH AMBOY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools

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Friday, October 30, 2020

Dear Perth Amboy School District Community,

I want to thank our entire teaching faculty and staff members for contributing their daily efforts, focus, and care in nurturing students forward in an effort to guide them in attaining an equal educational footprint, so that the students have opportunities to contribute their talents to this nation for decades to come. This school year has been a monumental undertaking by all, while continuously keeping students at the forefront of our actions since March 2020 to ensure we work collegially to collectively provide students with a meaningful education during this critical time in our nation. The continued support we collectively provide students will impact this District, Community, County, State and Nation.

The safety and well-being of students, the entire staff, the Perth Amboy Community and all stakeholders of the Perth Amboy School District is of the utmost importance and focus when determining how the district should proceed during this crisis in our nation. The decision to commence to a hybrid schedule on Thursday, November 19, 2020 or to remain with remote learning is not an easy one to make. The essential and pivotal concern is maintaining the integrity of our programs for approximately 11,500 students and their families and supporting approximately 2,000 faculty and staff members to achieve the goal of assisting students.

As denoted in previous correspondence, the Perth Amboy Public School District will be closed for Fall Recess on Monday, November 2, 2020, through Friday, November 6, 2020. Please take this opportunity to regroup, rest, and reflect on the work that is jointly ahead of us for the remainder of the school year. Upon the District's return from Fall Recess, **Perth Amboy Public Schools anticipates remaining with Remote Learning until February 4, 2021, the last day of the 2nd Marking Period. The tentative date for students and staff to begin a Hybrid Schedule is Friday, February 5, 2021.** This date will be reassessed pending the status of the public health emergency.

The following are some examples of our collective, collaborative, and united accomplishments, programmatic changes, protocols, and procedures that went into effect to ensure the integrity of instruction and a robust virtual learning environment for all students and staff. Thank you for your continued efforts!

Programmatic Changes since March 2020

On March 2, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Health memo asked schools to plan and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by developing a Pandemic Plan to prepare for school closings and to offer remote

instruction to students. As a result, the Office of Curriculum & Instruction developed guidelines for continued remote instruction in grades PreK-12 at home. These guidelines included the creation and development of Google Classrooms and instructional packets for students in grades PreK-8. These Google Classrooms and instructional packets allowed teachers to provide remote instruction in real time (synchronous learning) and instruction via assignments and tasks that students completed independently (asynchronous learning). Students and teachers in grades 9-12 were able to engage in remote instruction from home more easily considering that students already had their own device as part of the 1:1 Chromebook initiative.

The Pandemic Plan was initially designed for 15 days of instruction. Once it became evident that the school closure was to extend beyond 15 days, the district focused on the distribution of Chromebook devices to all K-8 students. Between March 25, 2020 and April 8, 2020, more than 5,000 Chromebook devices were distributed to students in grades K-8 in a concerted effort to provide them with the necessary technology to engage in remote learning from home during school closures. The district has proactively continued to provide technical support to teachers and students, including 3,000 MiFi devices for families with limited or no internet connectivity at home.

During the month of July, more than 500 students in grades K-4 participated in a Virtual Summer School Program. The Program also included 579 students in grades 5-8 and 483 High School students who benefited from credit recovery classes and enrichment opportunities. The district also served 161 special education students who participated in the district's extended school year program (ESY).

As the school year started and valuable feedback was obtained from parents and staff, adjustments were made to the PreK and K-4 all-remote day schedule to better meet our students' needs while safeguarding our programs' instructional integrity. In August 2020, as per the New Jersey Department of Education Restart and Recovery Plan, the District created a plan that addressed areas such as Technology & Connectivity, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments, and Professional Learning to ensure continuity of learning. As a result, District guidelines and expectations were developed and shared with staff, students, and parents to ensure that students continue to receive high quality, all-remote, standard-based instruction for the current school year.

Facilities Update

First and foremost, we have not lost sight of the future and focus for the students of this community. To that end, the District continues to have regular bi-weekly meetings with the New Jersey School Development Authority (SDA) pertaining to building the new Perth Amboy High School. It is important to acknowledge that we are currently on schedule to build the new high school which will be a total of 575,000 square feet and at an estimated cost of \$260,000,000.

The District is continuing to move forward, working to ensure that all standards and guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) are a part of our daily conversation as to what we need to implement; for example:

- Our district is leading the way with clean and safe facilities using the safest and most effective products to ensure the cleanliness of our schools. The Buildings and Grounds Department has been diligent and proactive in preparing for our eventual reopening.
- We have begun to remove and store furniture, desks, chairs, cabinets, and related items to create an open, clean area for students and staff to ensure proper social distancing and effective instruction.

- We are employing a highly organized strategy that includes tagging, inventory, and placing all items within their respective buildings. We have ordered various storage containers to be housed at each location for those buildings that do not have sufficient space.
- Our custodial staff has been an integral part of the proper functionality of the district and will continue to do so while always following CDC guidelines.
- Despite having our buildings closed for instruction, several projects continue. Our Maintenance crew has taken the opportunity to complete various Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and painting projects throughout the district. We have also begun construction on the expansion of our Health Sciences Academy at our Main Campus High School and are completely rebuilding the Media Center at both McGinnis and Shull Middle Schools. McGinnis Middle School is also getting a renovated roof. We hope that upon our return, students and staff will appreciate and enjoy the fruits of our labor.
- Our School Nurses have been at the forefront of our preparation for an eventual return. Nurses have been part of various meetings related to the pandemic. Whether it be via professional development, or group meetings, our nurses are staying up to date on information everyone will need to navigate a successful return to normalcy. We will continue to count on their knowledge and medical expertise throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

Enhanced Procedures and Protocols

Perth Amboy Public Schools has put in place a wide array of procedures and protocols to ensure our top priority, the safety and security of all students and staff. In addition to the continuance of all safety and security measures that the school district has had in place, prior to this pandemic, we have implemented the following additional procedures to further ensure that all CDC Guidelines and Governor's Executive Orders are adhered to; for example:

- Adherence to all school building capacity restrictions as delineated by CDC Guidelines and the Governor's Executive Orders.
- Separate, designated entrances and exits for students, staff, and visitors.
- Temperature checks for all students, staff, and visitors entering our buildings.
- Mandatory reporting for all staff of any exposures, which may jeopardize the safety and security of all.
- Prominently displayed information signage for COVID19, such as, directions and social distancing markers.
- A meal preparation and distribution plan that includes Grab and Go and student or parent pick up to ensure all students and families have access to meals while adhering by CDC guidelines.
- The requirement of all students and staff to wear masks at all times except when consuming a meal/beverage in a controlled environment, as dictated by individualized learning plans and or as permitted by CDC Guidelines and the Governor's Executive Orders.
- Class sizes and student seating that adhere to social distancing and CDC Guidelines as set forth by the Governor's Executive Orders.
- Continuously cleaned and sanitized surface areas, feeding areas and restrooms.
- Thoroughly cleaned and maintained heating and ventilation systems.
- The use of electrostatic sanitizing units throughout all buildings and school vehicles.

It is important to remember, that during the Fall Recess, **Perth Amboy Public Schools will continue to provide breakfast and lunch on a modified schedule** for our students on **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday**, at the **following four sites below**. Upon our return on Monday, November 9, 2020, we will resume our regular meal distribution.

Food Distribution - Locations and Times

Monday, November 2, 2020, Wednesday, November 4, 2020 & Friday, November 6, 2020

- Robert N. Wilentz School - 51 First Street – 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Rose M. Lopez School – 435 Seaman Avenue – 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Perth Amboy High School – 300 Eagle Avenue – 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- The Perth Amboy Office of Recreation – 1 Olive Street – 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

IMPORTANT DATES

(Additional information will be shared when appropriate and applicable.)

Fall Recess	November 2, 2020 – November 6, 2020
End of Marking Period 1	Wednesday, November 18, 2020
Beginning of Marking Period 2 (Schools Continue with Remote Learning)	Thursday, November 19, 2020
Early Dismissal Day for Staff and Students	Wednesday, November 25, 2020
Thanksgiving Recess	November 26, 2020 – November 27, 2020
Holiday Recess	December 24, 2020 – January 1, 2021
End of Marking Period 2	Thursday, February 4, 2021
* <i>Tentative Date</i> for Students & Staff to begin Hybrid Schedule (Pending the status of the Public Health Emergency)	Friday, February 5, 2021 <i>*Tentative Date</i>

Pandemic Response Teams (PRT) continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis. These valuable teams help our district answer questions and find ways to move forward as we prepare for our eventual return to school. Principals have received valuable feedback from these meetings. The information is reciprocal as we are also gathering valuable information from staff throughout the pandemic. Our Pandemic Response Teams will continue to meet throughout the year. Please ensure you speak to your principals about your school's PRT, as there are parents and staff members on school teams from various buildings already meeting regularly.

The Perth Amboy School District is working arduously to return our students and staff to an environment which is supportive of the compliance and guidance received from the CDC and the New Jersey Department of Education. I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to the Perth Amboy School District Community for your continued support as we navigate during these challenging times. Please be safe and enjoy your well-deserved break.

Sincerely,

Dr. David A. Roman

David A. Roman, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools