

SWEDESBORO-WOOLWICH SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

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Kristin P. O'Neil, Ed. D
Superintendent of Schools

Christopher J. DeStratis
School Business Administrator

November 20, 2020

Dear SWSD Families,

Unfortunately, this morning, the District learned of additional positive test results among our SWSD family which resulted in two full classes of quarantined students and additional quarantined SWSD staff. As of today, the District has quarantined a total of 18 staff as compared to 10 staff identified yesterday for COVID-19 related reasons. Yesterday, a total of 13 staff were quarantined based on all of the possible recommended factors outlined in NJDOH criteria, and today there are a total of 21 staff districtwide meeting this quarantine criteria. District and building specific staff have been impacted. As such, the District will continue to remain on remote learning status for all students through **Friday, December 4, 2020**. **The District will plan to reopen for “Hybrid Cohort A” students on Monday, December 7, 2020.**

The COVID-19 data throughout New Jersey and our Tri-state area is changing rapidly. Guidance from the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s Policy Lab “has recommended closing schools for at least one week before and after Thanksgiving” (NJEA 11/19/20). In addition, they advise a “similar pre-post quarantine period for Christmas time and New Year’s” (Children’s Hospital Policy Lab 11/11/20). “At Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, PCR test positivity rates this past weekend surpassed 15%, a number that nearly doubled in a week” (NJEA 11/19/20). Finally, as noted in the [Clayton Public School District 11-18-20 Community Letter](#), over the past week, *COVID-19 cases have risen by 49% in New Jersey and 82% in Gloucester County*. SWSD has felt this impact throughout this week, too.

SWSD is encouraging everyone throughout our community to adhere to the guidelines and recommendations set-forth throughout New Jersey over this holiday season. To explain our rationale for encouraging everyone to take these precautions seriously, it is important to reference Rutgers University, Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs, which reported today:

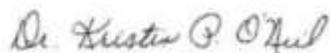
*“On November 20th, the nation is seeing its highest rate of new cases since the beginning of the pandemic, at about 50 new cases per 100K population. According to Harvard’s Global Health Institute, case rates of greater than 25/100K indicate the most severe level of outbreak, suggesting shutdown measures. The only two counties not in this red zone are Cumberland and Sussex, and those are close. The highest county, Passaic, now as a new case rate of 66/100K. In the past week, New Jersey averaged almost 4,000 new cases **every day**. At its lowest point this summer, New Jersey was averaging about 2,000 new cases **per week**. At its highest point his spring, New Jersey was averaging about 4,200 cases every day.”*

What Happens Now?

- a. All Parent-Teacher Conferences will continue as scheduled. (No change.)
- b. All students will begin remote instruction on **Friday, Nov. 20, 2020**.
- c. Your child’s classroom teacher will communicate the specific teaching schedule for your children. Please look in your child’s Google Classroom for schedule information and questions regarding your child’s schedule should be directed to your child’s classroom teacher(s).
- d. Remote instruction will continue through **Friday, December 4, 2020**. (No instruction will be provided on-site during this time.)
- d. The current plan includes a return date to on-site instruction on **Monday, December 7, 2020** for “Hybrid Cohort A;” however, as I have encouraged families to do many, many times before, please have an emergency back-up plan in the event this date is extended or in the event we need to transition again to full remote status due to health concerns. **The District will reassess this decision by 12/4/20 to ensure we can re-open and continue to provide a safe environment for everyone.**

The health and safety of our students and staff members has been and will continue to be our top priority. I sincerely thank you for your support, flexibility, and understanding.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kristin P. O’Neil

Superintendent