

**Dr. Melissa Varley** noreply@bhpsnj.org via [spe.schoolmessenger.com](https://www.speschoolmessenger.com)  
Nov 11, 2020, 7:08 AM  
(4 days ago)

Dear Families and Staff;

Over the past several weeks, I have regularly received emails from parents and staff offering a broad spectrum of opinions as to how the district should proceed with our school reopening plans. With the most recent outbreak of COVID-19 in our community, the correspondence has increased. At one end of the spectrum there are those who are advocating for all schools to be fully open, with all students attending every day. At the other end, there are those who want all schools to remain completely remote for the duration of the pandemic. In between these two extremes there are multiple combinations of suggestions for hybrid and remote instruction.

We all know the limitations of the hybrid model and that nothing can truly replace in-person instruction. We also know that the emotional well-being of our students dictates that they be in school as much as possible. And, of course, we must prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff. COVID-19 is still with us and the infection rates are starting to surge. There are multiple competing and equally valid concerns that must be weighed in making the decisions concerning how to move forward with our schools.

As of today, there are 48 students in our district who have tested positive for COVID-19. There are no new district cases to report in the past two days. In addition, there are 297 GLHS students currently quarantined due to contact with one of the positive cases, as well as 48 K-8 students who are also quarantined. For the most part, this is because they have a sibling who has tested positive. There are also 68 staff members who are currently quarantining because they came into contact with a student who tested positive. Finally, within the broader Berkeley Heights community, there are currently 74 active COVID-19 cases.

Let me take a moment to clear up some confusion, GLHS as a school is not quarantining. GLHS as a school is in remote instruction. There are GLHS students who are quarantined, meaning that they should remain in their houses because they have either tested positive or been exposed to COVID-19. However, the majority of GLHS students are not quarantined and can move about with no restrictions.

Over the past several days I have had numerous discussions with Mayor Devanney, public health officials, the district pandemic team, and the Board of Education. Given the severity of our outbreak, and the increasing numbers in

both our community and in the state at large, the most prudent course of action is to keep Governor Livingston High School in remote instruction until Monday, December 7. In grades 1-5, the implementation of Plan A, all students attending for half days, will be delayed until January 19, 2021. As of right now, we will not move to remote instruction for our other schools. Accordingly, grades 1-8 students will remain on the current Plan B model: 50% of students in-person, alternating weeks, no lunch, and an early dismissal. The Pre-K and Kindergarten schedule will remain unchanged.

We will, of course, stay vigilant and re-evaluate the situation and our plans as needed. We have all seen how quickly things can change and how letting our guard down for just one weekend can have a tremendous impact on everyone. As we enter the late Fall and the Winter, we need to redouble our efforts to stay disciplined with our masks and social distancing.

GLHS	Remains Remote until 12/7
1-5	Plan A -Delayed to 1/19/20
1-8	Remains on Plan B - 50% in-person instruction, alternating weeks, no lunch, early dismissal
Pre-K & K	No change to schedule

Sincerely,

Dr. Melissa Varley