

Dear Families.

Happy Summer!

Before I get to the business of this letter, I would like to take a moment to discuss the impending retirement of Frank Geiger. Over the last two years I have come to know, respect, and admire Frank. There are very few people I have encountered in education who are such tireless advocates for their students. You need to look no further than 'Geiger's Garage' during the heart of the pandemic to see how much he cares for each and every one of his students. I will miss Frank, but I know he will be happily spending his time with his children and grandchildren. Best of luck in your retirement Frank, thank you for your service.

Also, another goodbye to Tom Long, Tom is one of those unsung heroes in every organization. He is an incredible source of knowledge about the mysterious and ever-changing state requirements and keeps the incredible volume of paperwork moving smoothly. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to the district.

Attached to this email you will find our Road Forward plan that is very similar to the plan I sent out on [June 11th](#). If you want to review the entire plan you can view it [here](#). Below are some of the highlights of the plan and you will also be hearing from your building principals soon with more detailed information about individual buildings.

- Governor Murphy has issued a mask mandate. Starting on August 9, 2021 all staff and students in school buildings must wear masks.
- We are planning for all students to be in school, in person, full day, with lunch.
- PK-5 will have staggered lunches and recess schedules and barriers
- CMS will expand lunch spaces into the gyms and also use barriers
- GLHS will start open campus immediately to free space for underclassmen. Seniors must still complete all open campus paperwork in order prior to leaving campus.
- GLHS will use the cafeteria and both gyms with barriers.
- Across all buildings we will do our best to use the outdoors for lunches while the weather lasts.
- All areas will be cleaned between seatings.
- There will be no remote instruction or hybrid instruction this year, unless we need to quarantine students. We will determine the exact configuration of this on a case-by-case basis. - More on this below.
- The CDC has issued new guidance on close contact. If an individual is masked and comes into contact with a positive case, they will no longer need to quarantine. This should significantly reduce the number of people in quarantine this year. Granted, per the NJDOH, our nursing staff will need to work closely with the teaching staff to ensure that appropriate mask wearing was followed.
- I urge you to share your child's vaccination status with your school nurse. It will only be used by the nurse if it is needed for contact tracing.

- The state has given guidance that districts are no longer allowed to use remote days for snow days. Given this guidance I am asking the BOE to increase our snow days from three to four. To accommodate this, I am asking April 18th to be a day in school.

The NJDOE guidance on reopening schools, The Road Forward, mandates that if a student is quarantined for Covid-19 the district “should be prepared to offer virtual or remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction to the extent possible.” [Road Forward Page 13](#) Effectively, this means that in the case of a student or student(s) being quarantined we must provide remote instruction using the hybrid model. This option will only be available to students who are medically verified as being under a Covid 19 quarantine. Students will not be allowed to be absent but virtual, students will not be allowed to opt for remote instruction, and students with other illnesses will follow normal absence procedures. I am hopeful that the new CDC [guidance](#) on close contacts will reduce the number of quarantines. If people are properly masked while exposed, they are no longer considered to be in close contact and do not need to quarantine. The best thing everyone can do to keep students safe and in school is to practice social distancing and mask discipline.

The Pre K-5 Principals have distributed letters discussing meet and greets and teacher assignments. If you did not receive a letter, please reach out to your building principal.

Just reminding all students that if they need assistance in completing summer assignments or would like to review previous course material, National Honor Society tutors from Governor Livingston are available to help during the summer. Please visit the **National Honors Society's** [website](#) to register and find more information.

The **Berkeley Heights Police Department** needs Crossing guards. Please see the attached flyer for more information! Help us keep these children safe as they walk and ride to school! [Crossingguards.png](#)

It is my intention to do everything possible to keep schools open for full day in-person instruction. However, as the last year has shown us, that we must be prepared to be flexible in the face of the Pandemic. I want to thank the admin team and the BHEA for all their hard work in getting ready for the opening of school. I look forward to seeing everyone in September!

Enjoy the last few weeks of summer.

Sincerely,

Melissa Varley