

July 31, 2020

Dear Parents and Members of the Garfield School Community:

Since receiving the directive from the New Jersey Department of Education that in-person instruction is mandatory in September 2020, our district has been working earnestly to develop a plan that is best suited for our students and families while keeping health and safety protocols as the priority. The Restart and Recovery Committee, made up of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and Board of Education members, has been working in collaboration with our district committees, to provide a reopening plan that addresses the required areas in the document released by the NJDOE Document, "The Road Back, Restart and Recovery Plan for Education".

Due to the fact that our schools and classrooms have limited space and social distancing is a priority, our plan includes the implementation of a hybrid schedule that allows 50% person of our student population to receive in person instruction while the other 50% of our students are learning remotely at home. Our students will be divided into two cohorts: Purple and Gold.

The Purple cohort of students will receive in person instruction on Mondays and Tuesdays and learn remotely on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. The Gold cohort of students will receive in person instruction on Thursdays and Fridays and will learn remotely on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Our in-person school days will consist of four hours, while starting and ending times for students may be staggered to avoid large gatherings. Students in our Self-contained Special Education programs will receive in person instruction four times per week and will learn remotely on Wednesdays. Related services for these students will be provided during the days of in person instruction.

Every effort will be made to put siblings in the same cohort if possible. All meals will be grab and go and multiple meals will be sent home with students for days that they are not in school. Students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear masks at all times while in the schools even when social distancing is possible. There will be designated mask breaks when possible in the classrooms.

Our parent survey indicated that more live and video recorded lessons from the teacher is essential to the improvement of remote learning. The district will be addressing this concern as we move into the new school year. Our teachers will be given the required professional development and necessary technology to make this happen. The one platform that we will continue to use as a district is TEAMS; tutorials will also be made available for parents so that they could assist in the remote learning process. Additionally, the district has ordered new computer devices for all students in grades K-3 as well as iPads for students in the PreK. Our students in grades 4-12 previously received their computers during the 2019-2020 school year. This means that every student and family will have access to a computer to advance remote learning in the home. Our administrators and teachers will be reaching out to all families to ensure that connectivity to the internet is not an issue in the home.

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We Do Not discriminate as to Age, Race, Creed, National Origin, Gender, Sexual Orientation, or
Disability

Parents will have the option to have their child(children) participate in fully remote learning, which means that the student will not attend in person instruction on any day and will learn remotely/virtually every day. If a parent chooses this option, the student must continue with fully remote/virtual learning until the end of Phase 1, which runs from Sept. 8- October 16, 2020 so that the previously established class sizes will not be increased and lead to an issue with social distancing. Please inform the district in writing if you choose the fully remote option no later than August 10th. It is important that you send an email to the principal with your child's name and grade as soon as possible so we can begin the scheduling process.

Our Restart and Recovery Plan has been submitted to the Bergen County Superintendent's office today and we must wait for approval of our plan prior to releasing it to our school community. *In the meantime, the district is preparing to provide a full summary of the plan so that parents, students, and our staff will have insight into the changes that will be implemented as we open our doors and welcome everyone back to school. This additional information will be provided to you next week and will serve to address many of your questions and concerns.*

On behalf of the District Administration and the Board of Education, I want to thank each of you for your support, understanding, and patience during these challenging times. Please know that while we are aware of the importance of bringing our staff and students back to our schools, health and safety will remain our first priority.

Please continue to check our website regularly, particularly after you receive a call that new information is available. *The 2020-2021 District calendar has been revised and is posted on the website. Students will return to school on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. This will allow the teachers time to receive professional development during the first week of school.*

I wish you and your families well and hope that everyone is remaining safe and healthy as you enjoy the last month of summer.

Kind Regards,
Anna Sciacca
Superintendent of Garfield Public Schools