

December 31, 2021

Dear Hackensack Public Schools Community

In conjunction with the Hackensack Health Department, we continue to closely monitor the COVID-19 data within our schools, city limits and region to create the safest possible environment for our entire school community. We are aware of the level of concern regarding holiday gatherings during the break and the associated rise in the number of COVID-19 cases locally and throughout the nation. We also recognize the benefits of in-person instruction for our scholars.

The decision to pivot to remote instruction is not one that is taken lightly. Prior to switching to remote instruction at any school building(s) due to COVID-19, we must first consult with our local health department to determine if that is the most appropriate response to the circumstances in a given school building. These determinations are made on a building-by-building basis, depending upon the impact of COVID-19 in each building.

With that said, after consulting with the Hackensack Health Department, we have determined that **all Hackensack Public Schools will go fully remote from January 3rd through January 7, 2022**. We know that this news is disappointing for some and welcomed for others. We also know that the timing of this notification is not ideal; however, any decision made prior to today would have been premature. Please know this decision has been made in the best interest of public health and the very real concern that we would not be able to operate our schools safely and effectively.

Effective Monday, January 3, 2022, the district will pivot to remote learning and implement its NJDOE-approved remote learning plan ([2021-2022 HPS Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan](#)) for all schools. Please note, as per the District's Emergency Virtual or Remote Learning Plan, **Day 1 (Jan. 3rd) will be asynchronous and Live instruction will begin on Day 2 (Jan 4th)**. You will receive specific scheduling, as well as other logistical information, from your building principals in a separate communication. Furthermore, due to the timing of this notification, **the district will distribute breakfast and lunch from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at all schools Monday through Friday this week only**, which is different to what is stated in the plan. Meals will be available to all students enrolled in the Hackensack Public Schools, regardless of their parents'/guardians' eligibility status. Families may pick up meals on a "Grab & Go" basis.

This temporary remote period allows time for local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting our District. This situation will continually be evaluated in the days ahead and we will provide you with an update by Thursday, January 6th for the following week.

In the meantime, please help us stay safe by following the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention promoted safeguards, such as:

- Staying home when sick;
- Practicing social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart);
- Wearing a mask; and
- Continuing to monitor your health for symptoms

We appreciate everyone for working with us during this difficult time. This is hard for all of us, but together, we will persevere. Our hope is that once the spread is contained, we can return to in-person learning in a safe and positive way. Thank you for helping us keep our community safe.

Wishing you a healthy and happy New Year,

Sincerely,

Robert Sanchez
Superintendent