October 20, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As a community, we are truly blessed. November is around the corner, and I never imagined in July that we would be as fortunate to have schools still open and extra-curricular activities taking place daily. I want to commend all of our school community constituents for their efforts and cooperation with our health and safety protocol. I want to especially thank our teachers for their amazing accomplishments with the new landscape over the past two months!

I know you have many questions about the future, and I recognize that despite all of the accomplishments, we are still not providing the full educational experience that our students have come to appreciate each and every year. We recognize that there are students who are struggling in this environment and others who are making progress while having the full continuum of successes and concerns. I want to assure you that we are evaluating different scenarios each week as we learn about how to best ensure everyone’s health while maintaining schools that are open and providing in-person instruction. Our goal is to have everyone back to a normal school schedule at some point in the future. I wish I could definitively say when that will occur.

In the meantime, our next logical step would be to establish full-day in-person instruction for students while still following the A/B schedule. We are looking into ways to safely address lunch so that we can allow students to stay for the full day instead of going home for the PM remote session. On Thursday, at our Board of Education meeting, we have invited Megan Avallone from the Westfield Department of Health to attend via Zoom so that we can discuss the Department of Health’s projections and insights. This discussion may help to guide our thoughts and path moving forward. Operationally, what we have learned is that our six-foot social distancing as well as the wearing of masks has allowed us to continue to maintain in-person instruction despite having a number of positive cases thus far. These elements are critical to our success and must be considered as we move forward.

I would also encourage you to join us for our next two Think Tank 2.0 presentations at Thursday’s Board Meeting. These two presentations include Data Driven Decision-Making and Instructional Strategies. Mr. Richter will present our research on Data, and Mrs. Zirpoli and Mrs. Bromley will share their committee’s outcomes on Instructional Strategies. We look forward to their insights! The Board of Education Meeting Notice with Zoom information can be found on the district website here.

In addition, as we come to the end of the first marking period and subsequent trimester conclusion, students in Group C who would like to transition to in-person learning for the second marking period or second trimester via Groups A & B can do so by completing the form linked HERE by November 1st. We anticipate that some of our students will look to make this move next month.

Finally, we also plan to gather information from students, parents and teachers to assist us in our decision-making regarding schedules and programming. Be on the lookout for letters from your principals.

Once again, thank you for your support and patience as we move forward as a community.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools