



MOUNTAINSIDE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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MRS. JANET WALLING – SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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Mountainside Parents/Guardians and Staff:

Good evening. I would like to begin by wishing everyone a safe and healthy Thanksgiving! Quite often at this time of the year we are asked, “What are you most thankful for?” This year, more than ever I am thankful for not only my family and good health, but also for every single one of you! We would not have been able to accomplish what we have so far this year without the unrelenting dedication, support, and commitment of every single Mountainside staff member and family.

The District continues to regularly monitor local and state health information and guidance as it pertains to increased COVID-19 cases in Mountainside and around the state. One of the pieces of data we review each week is the New Jersey Department of Health’s [COVID-19 Activity Level Report](#). This week’s report has placed all of the regions in our state – including our region, Central East – at the “High” (Orange) activity level. The top level is “Very High” (Red). Today I reviewed this and other local data with the Westfield Regional Health Department and our school physician. **At this point, both sources support keeping our schools open while continuing to closely monitor the data** and diligently implementing the clear processes we currently have: (1) quickly identify and quarantine individuals when necessary, and (2) place identified classrooms/cohorts on remote instruction when/if individual cases may dictate.

The Health Department does advise us, however, to be prepared to move to fully remote learning should our region enter the “red/very high” range or if changes in local cases warrant. As such, I ask that you are alert for updates on any potential changes to our school schedule and remain flexible should we need to make adjustments based on local COVID-19 data and guidance from the Health Department.

It is our intent to continue with in-person instruction until such time as local health guidance and data indicates otherwise. In order to do this successfully and safely we need to continue to work together. Students and staff need to stay home if they, or a member of their household does not feel well; families should continue communicating any health concerns directly with our school nurses in order to quickly identify any potential exposures or positive cases; and most of all we need to ALL continue to follow the health and safety guidelines that are in place both in and out of school. Next week our school nurses will also be sending out updated health and safety information as it pertains to recent changes in guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the Westfield Regional Health Department.

The District currently has the following active COVID-19 cases and families in any of the classrooms directly impacted by these cases have already been notified that an individual in their child’s class has tested positive:

Beechwood School – 1

Deerfield School – 4 (2 of these individuals were not in attendance at any point during their infectious period)

I appreciate your continued support and cooperation. Please remain vigilant in your approach to dealing with this health concern, especially during the upcoming holidays.

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