



Mountainside School District

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Janet Walling - Superintendent of Schools

April 29, 2021

Dear Mountainside Parents and Guardians:

I am very pleased to share that as of May 3rd, 95% of our students will be attending school in person. With this significant decrease in remote-only students, AND with an eye towards a full day instructional format being planned for September, we will be making adjustments to our fully remote instructional model for the final weeks of school (Mid-May – June).

We are working with our technology department and teachers to plan and implement a more synchronous model of instruction where remote students will “attend” school with their in-person peers for greater portions of their morning via Zoom/Meets. This adjustment will require remote students to closely follow the in-person schedule and timing. In addition to providing a more authentic educational setting for our remote students, this shift will help them to develop a more structured routine in preparation for a return to in-person instruction in the fall.

This instructional shift will also allow for increased academic opportunities for ALL students during the afternoon portion of the day. This afternoon time will consist of **scheduled remote sessions** where teachers will meet with groups of students to extend their instructional day and meet the varied needs of all students through targeted learning opportunities. This additional instructional time will be **required** learning as it will consist of standards-based instruction geared towards supporting student growth and preparation for next year. The structure, timing, and number of weekly sessions for each student may vary based upon grade and developmental level as well as academic needs.

Detailed schedules will be sent to parents/guardians from each grade level and teacher prior to this transition so that you can plan your child’s schedule accordingly.

Our target date for implementation is the week of May 17th, but this date may be adjusted based upon acquisition of essential technology as well as staff training and preparation. Please reach out to your child’s principal or teacher if you have specific questions regarding these changes.

On a separate note, I am VERY pleased to share that we were notified this morning by the NJDOH that for the first time since November 4th our region, and the entire state, is in the **Yellow/Moderate** zone for the weekly COVID Activity Level Report. This is something to be celebrated as a testament to everyone’s diligence to protocols and increased vaccinations.

This change in activity level adjusts the timelines regarding quarantine per NJDOH requirements as follows:

- **Moderate or Low (yellow or green) COVID Regional Activity Level: Exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 10 days. (or 7 days with negative PCR test results collected at 5-7 days)**
 - **Specifically, this means that students or staff can return to school on day 11 after exposure without testing, or they can return on day 8 with a negative PCR Test.**
 - **Dates/details must be verified and coordinated with the school nurse before a student or staff member can return.**
- **These guidelines will also apply to any students who are on a travel quarantine.**
- **Should our region return to an Orange/High level at any time in the future, we will adjust our requirements to align with the NJDOH guidance in place for that specific activity level.**

Please feel free to reach out to the school nurses if you have any questions about this change. As always, thank you for your dedication to protecting the health and safety of the students and staff of Mountainside!

Janet Walling