July 29, 2020

Dear LCMR Students and Families:

As we are fast approaching the first day of school, we are prepared to announce our schedule for reopening to in-person learning this fall. The decision of how to reopen our schools was complex and many factors were considered to develop this plan. While our goal was to provide in-person instruction to our students in as normal a setting as possible, the COVID-19 virus has dictated a new normal, especially for our schools. With that said, our highest priority will be on the safety and health of every student and staff member that comes into our buildings each day.

The Lower Cape May Regional School District will open September 8, 2020 on a hybrid schedule whereby 25% of our students will be in attendance each day for in-person learning with the remaining 75% participating in remote instruction. Students will be segmented into four groups titled Capers, Tigers, Pride, and Spirit. Under the 25% plan, each group would attend school in-person one day each week. I have posted a school calendar which indicates which groups are to attend school each day. By initially opening schools with this limited capacity, we can ensure that our classrooms, busses, lunchrooms, and hallways are adequately spaced to provide everyone safe social distancing. This strategy also allows us to work through new health and safety protocols. All students and staff will be required to wear masks throughout the day and other measures recommended by the CDC will be put in place to enhance the health and safety of everyone. We will use the first two weeks of school to evaluate all protocols, make necessary adjustments, and analyze health data. Assuming all indicators are pointing in the right direction, we will increase our student capacity to 50% of students attending each day beginning Monday, September 21st. Under this rate of attendance, students would attend school two days per week. Under both the 25% and 50% plans, each Wednesday during a normal 5 day week will be a remote day for all students to allow deep cleaning of our buildings. Weeks shortened by holidays will not have an entirely remote day for all students.

The calendar indicates which student groups will attend school each day throughout the year. Should events allow us to increase to 100% student capacity, the calendar will be revised accordingly. The district will also offer an entirely virtual learning option for families with
concerns and issues about returning to school. We are currently developing policies and procedures for the all virtual option based on newly released guidelines from the New Jersey Department of Education. We will make these new policies and procedures available to all district families in the coming weeks.

Student groupings and other details specific to reopening schools will be sent to families in mid-August with their school schedules. Meanwhile, I anticipate there will be many questions regarding the reopening of school. In an effort to answer your questions or concerns, I will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting to present our District Reopening Plan and to take questions. This meeting will be live streamed and dates, times, and login information will be posted on our district webpage in the coming days.

Meanwhile our Reopening Committees are continuing work on our plan to reopen in a manner that provides for the safety and health of everyone that enters our schools each day. I eagerly look forward to once again opening the doors to our facilities and igniting the life and energy that only our students can bring to our schools. Until then, please be safe and be well.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Castellucci
Superintendent

JAC/tj

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