

*Paramus Public Schools:  
Public Board Update*

December 14, 2020

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# General Information (1 of 2)

- **Parent/Guardian Workshops**

- *Raising Resilient Kids*

- Paramus Public Schools, in partnership with Care Plus, NJ, will be offering virtual workshops on a monthly basis that will cover a range of topics related to the ongoing pandemic and how it may impact mental health. During these workshops, our Care Plus clinicians will provide specific strategies to help parents/guardians navigate these challenging times. The first virtual workshop, “The Prolonged Pandemic: Do you have enough strategies to ride the wave?” will be offered on December 16th, 2020. Further information on this workshop and the remaining workshops in the series is located on the [Raising Resilient Kids: Parent/Guardian Workshop flyer](#).

- *Community Connections Virtual Information Sessions*

- We are inviting all parents/guardians to participate in information sessions dealing with a variety of school-related topics such as pandemic-related health protocols, social-emotional learning, instructional technology, finance and budgeting, and important curriculum enhancements. These sessions will be designed to provide interested parents/guardians with additional insight into the ongoing applicability of these topics to their children’s schooling as well as to provide opportunities for them to ask questions and share comments with key members of our administrative and planning teams. If you are interested in participating in any of these sessions, please complete the [Paramus Community Connections Virtual Information Session Invitation](#).



# General Information (2 of 2)

- **[COVID-19 Quarantine Dashboard](#)**
  - The data included in these dashboards contain only those cases in which a school-based quarantine (e.g., group of students, full classroom, grade level, school building) was necessary due to in-school close contact with the positive or symptomatic individual.
  - If you would like to be notified via email of updates to the dashboard, please complete the [COVID-19 Quarantine Dashboard Notification form](#). You have the option of receiving notifications for as few or as many buildings as you select on the form.
- **Emergency Closing Days**
  - Emergency closing days are designed to be utilized in the event that learning cannot feasibly take place (e.g., school cannot operate in a safe manner). Traditionally, these days have been utilized when inclement weather creates hazardous travel conditions.
  - Under the updated NJDOE guidance developed during the COVID-19 health crisis, virtual school days are permitted to continue even if the school buildings themselves cannot open safely.
  - Paramus Public Schools will continue to utilize emergency closing days as **intended**. If learning can feasibly take place from home in a virtual environment, then students will learn virtually. If learning cannot feasibly take place from home in a virtual environment (e.g., widespread power outages, digital learning platforms are offline, etc.), then an emergency closing day will be utilized.



# Transition to Full-Remote Learning: FAQs

- **Who makes the decision?**
  - The decision to transition to full-remote learning was made by the Superintendent subsequent to a recommendation made by the Paramus Department of Health, which also consulted with the New Jersey Department of Health prior to making this recommendation.
- **Why was there not a special Board of Education meeting to approve the decision?**
  - The NJDOE places responsibility for decisions related to implementing full-remote learning for schools and full districts with each Superintendent. However, each member of the Paramus Board of Education was individually informed by the Superintendent of the impending decision following the recommendation from the Department of Health.
- **Why was the community informed the day before Thanksgiving?**
  - The Paramus Department of Health contacted the Superintendent on Wednesday, November 25, with the recommendation to transition to full-remote learning. The community was informed that same day by the Superintendent following a comprehensive review of the recommendation and timeline.

# Transition to Full-Remote Learning: State Guidance

- [COVID-19 Activity Level Report](#)
  - This weekly report is published by the New Jersey Department of Health every Thursday and contains COVID-19 activity data for the preceding week.
  - The report divides the state into six regions (our region, Northeast, contains Bergen, Essex, and Hudson counties), and assigns one of four risk levels to each region: **Low**, **Moderate**, **High**, **Very High**.
    - Risk levels are measured according to the [COVID-19 Activity Level Index](#).
- [New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools](#)
  - This document contains guidelines to “inform the decision-making process for school districts when considering when remote learning might be indicated” and advises that “local circumstances should be considered when making decisions impacting specific school districts and schools.”
  - [COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#)
    - This matrix indicates that schools should implement full-remote learning if/when their region falls within the “**Very High**” risk level.
    - The guidance reiterates this point in its [table of school closure scenarios](#) by referencing a “very high risk of community transmission” as a precursor to closing schools to in-person learning.
  - Again, local departments of health should consider local circumstances when making decisions impacting the schools while utilizing the tools provided by the NJDOH to inform their decisions.

# Transition to Full-Remote Learning: Paramus

- The Paramus Department of Health, in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Health, reviews and confirms local health data.
- The local data for Paramus revealed a significant increase in the number and frequency of COVID-19 cases within the community.
  - [Paramus: Positive Cases Per Month \(June 2020 - November 2020\)](#)
  - Paramus: Positive Case Rate Per 100,000 People - **113.2**
  - [Paramus: Percent Positivity \(November\)](#) - **32.8%**
  - [Paramus: LTC Compared to Non-LTC \(November\)](#)
- In Paramus, both the case rate (113.2, which is greater than 25) and the percent positivity (32.8%, which is greater than 20%) place Paramus within the “**Very High**” risk level of the [COVID-19 Activity Level Index](#).
- The Superintendent is bound by ethical and statutory mandates to operate schools in a safe and responsible manner. Operating under the NJDOE/NJDOH guidance currently in place, the responsible course of action following a recommendation from the Department of Health is to follow that recommendation.
- [Bergen County School Districts: Current Learning Models \(as of December 14, 2020\)](#)



# Moving Forward

- In the near future, applicable committees from the district's overall [Restart and Recovery Committees](#) will reconvene to explore options for ways in which to increase the amount of in-person learning time for hybrid learners, considering updates to health guidelines (e.g., the CDC's definition of "close contact", the CDC's definition of quarantine period, etc.) as well as experiential knowledge gained throughout the course of the 2020-2021 school year:
  - *Health Precautions and Responses*
  - *Scheduling/Structure*
  - *Special Education and Related Services*
  - *Facilities*
  - *Transportation*