



February 23, 2021

Dear Paramus Community,

As has been stated since the start of the school year, the primary goal of our district's reopening plans this year has been to phase students back into in-person learning in a manner that is safe and responsible for all members of the school community. While our continued reopening of schools has not been without its challenges, we have held true to ensuring that all decisions we make are built upon a strong foundation of physical, social, and emotional health priorities. The nature of this pandemic--and the oftentimes conflicting ideas offered within multiple segments of our society--has led to competing beliefs about the most effective and prudent courses of action to take in returning our children to a much-needed sense of normalcy and wellness. However, we remain resolute in our commitment to ensuring the needs of all members of our school community are considered and incorporated as much as possible into our plans.

To that end, in looking ahead to the development of the next phases of our reopening model, the district carefully considered and incorporated feedback from the community, faculty/staff, and the district's Restart and Recovery Committees. We also conducted careful analyses of the [most up-to-date guidelines from the New Jersey Department of Health](#) and collaborated with the Paramus Board of Health and our District Physician to ensure our plans meet critical health and safety guidelines.

As discussed at last night's Board of Education meeting, I am excited to share with everyone the results of this important work. **Please carefully review the remaining information on this page and the following two pages. If you have any questions, please contact your school principal.**

****Important Points for Phase Progression****

- The timelines for progress through the phases detailed below will be determined by current health data, including the most up-to-date [COVID-19 Activity Level Index Weekly Report](#) in conjunction with the [COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#).
- Depending on the status of the pandemic at the time, the district may need to adjust learning models according to changes in the regional risk level.
- The full-remote learning option will remain in place for all students through the end of the school year.
- As of now, daily schedules will remain the same with in-person learners in the buildings for minimum session days and blended learning scheduled for the afternoon.
- The district will continue to evaluate the feasibility of extending the in-person learning schedule to full days during the implementation of the phases detailed below. Any changes in the length of the in-person school day, which of necessity would include students eating lunch in the building, would lead to an additional window of time for all families to change learning models before such a change is implemented.
- For additional information on the phases and the district's plans, please view the [February 22, 2021 Public Board Update](#). You may also view infographic summaries of each phase by clicking the links below:
 - [Phase II Infographic](#)
 - [Phase III Infographic](#)



Paramus Path Forward: Phase II (Regional Risk Level: Orange)

Timeframe:

- From March 9, 2021, until the regional COVID-19 activity risk level has been moderate (or yellow) for a duration of two consecutive weeks.

Key Characteristics:

- In-person cohorts are merged in grade levels in which social distancing of at least six feet can be maintained.
- In-person learning will take place four days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday).
- Mondays remain fully virtual during this phase.

Protocols:

- Beginning today, February 23, 2021, parents/guardians must commit their children to a selected learning model (hybrid or full-remote). This selection must be entered in the Genesis Parent Portal **by no later than March 1, 2021**.
- After March 1, no changes in the selected learning model will be allowed for the duration of Phase II.
- District-wide grade levels that can safely accommodate all in-person learners while maintaining at least six feet of social distancing will then be identified based on the number of students who commit to in-person learning*. The identification of these district-wide grade levels will be shared with the community during the week of March 1.
**To ensure equity, the grade level must be able to accommodate all in-person learners across the district (independent of building) in order to be eligible.*
- On Tuesday, March 9, in-person learners within the identified eligible grade levels will then begin attending school in person four days per week.
- Unless they are not feeling well or are excluded from participation due to quarantine, in-person learners cannot opt to participate remotely (“Present-Remote”). *In-person learners with two unexcused “Present-Remote” days must switch to the full-remote learning model for the duration of Phase II.*

****Please log into the [Genesis Parent Portal](#) and complete the Phase II Learning Model Form for each of your children. As a reminder, this form must be completed by no later than March 1, 2021.****



Paramus Path Forward: Phase III (Regional Risk Level: **Yellow)**

Timeframe:

- After the regional COVID-19 activity risk level has been moderate (or **yellow**) for a duration of two consecutive weeks.

Key Characteristics:

- In-person cohorts are merged across all grade levels in the district. Social distancing of at least six feet will be maintained *to the maximum extent practicable* in school/on the school bus and will be dependent upon the number of in-person learners.
- In-person learning will take place *five days a week* (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday).
- Virtual Mondays will be eliminated during this phase.

Protocols:

- District administration will monitor the [COVID-19 Activity Level Index Weekly Report](#) (published by the NJDOH each Thursday) for changes in our region's risk level.
- If our region is at yellow/moderate risk for two consecutive weeks:
 - Notification will be sent to the community the next day (Friday).
 - Parents/guardians must commit their children to a selected learning model (hybrid or full-remote) by no later than the following Tuesday (five days following notification of risk level change). This selection will be entered in the Genesis Parent Portal.
 - After that Tuesday, no changes in the selected learning model will be allowed for the duration of Phase III.
 - In-person cohorts in all grade levels will be merged effective the second Monday following parent/guardian selection of learning model (two weeks following selection).
- Unless they are not feeling well or are excluded from participation due to quarantine, in-person learners cannot opt to participate remotely ("Present-Remote"). In-person learners with two unexcused "Present-Remote" days must switch to the full-remote learning model for the duration of Phase III.

As always, we appreciate your support and understanding and look forward to the continued return of our students to school.

Sincerely,

Sean Adams
Superintendent of Schools