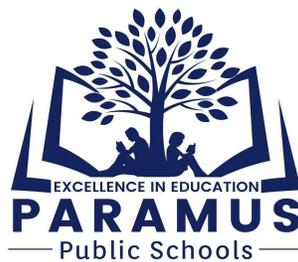


Office of the Superintendent
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Sean P. Adams
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July 25, 2020

Dear Paramus Community,

Throughout this past week, approximately 200 parents/guardians, faculty, staff, and administrators began collaborating across our fourteen restart committees on examining a variety of important school-reopening initiatives and tasks. As I stated in my initial communication announcing this collaborative process, these committees are designed to ensure the variety of representative voices and perspectives within our community are heard and carefully considered in the formation of our plans to return to school. With that goal in mind, all participants continue to work together on sharing and synthesizing critical perspectives representative of their stakeholder groups while working toward developing solutions for the reopening of the Paramus Public Schools.

While our [Paramus Community Connections](#) site will continue to be updated with details regarding the ongoing work conducted by all committees, I would like to share below critical information related to scheduling and health/safety guidelines that will be incorporated as part of the overall school reopening plans. Specific information regarding the schedules of individual students will be sent to their families no later than four weeks prior to the start of the school year (on approximately August 3, 2020).

Finally, on behalf of our Board of Education and entire Paramus school community, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude, appreciation, and admiration for the time, effort, and dedication invested by the members of our reopening committees, as well as everyone else who has been participating through other, more informal, means of contributing ideas and information to ensure the success of our return to school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Adams", written in a cursive style.

Sean Adams
Superintendent of Schools

Table of Contents

- [Critical Points of Consideration](#)
- [Individual Option for All-Remote Learning](#)
- [Phased-In Approach to Reopening Schools](#)
 - [Overview](#)
 - [Transition Phase](#)
 - [Orange Phase](#)
 - [Yellow Phase/Green Phase](#)



Critical Points of Consideration

The guidance released by the New Jersey Department of Education on June 26, 2020 ([The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education](#)) includes a large number of educational, economic, social-emotional health, and physical health-related directives and recommendations for schools to include in their reopening plans. To that end, the following critical points of consideration were reflected in all scheduling recommendations:

- Ensuring the health and safety of all members of the school community while returning to in-person education is of utmost importance.
- All schedules, procedures, and protocols must be designed to be reflective of the state of the health crisis at the time.
- *In-person* instructional/learning time must be designed to work in tandem with *virtual* instructional/learning time in order to maximize the benefits of the educational program.
- Students opting for all-remote learning must receive the same high-quality education, with the same learning goals, as students participating in hybrid learning models.
- Potential scenarios relating to child care options for families are currently being explored.
- The unique needs of all members of our school community must be considered in our approach to scheduling our return to school. While our plan is designed to address as much as possible the particular needs and perspectives provided to us by our school community, no overall return to school plan can possibly address each individual need. Therefore, procedures and protocols for exploring flexibility of options must be established to work toward meeting the particular needs of any members of our school community that cannot be met through the overall plan.



Individual Option for All-Remote Learning

On Friday, July 24, Governor Murphy and Interim Commissioner of Education, Kevin Dehmer, announced guidelines for the provision of an all-remote learning option for parents/guardians. In short, parents/guardians have the option to have their children enrolled in the Paramus Public Schools within an entirely virtual learning environment. This option is available to all students and cannot be contingent upon any predetermined conditions, such as risk of illness or other selective criteria. Students whose families opt to have them participate in all-remote learning must receive the same quality and scope of instruction and other educational services as any other student otherwise participating in district programs. For example, students participating in the all-remote learning program will have, among other items, the same access as all other students in the district to the following:

- Quality and rigor of standards-based instruction
- Educational technology
- Special education and related services to the greatest extent possible
- Length of school day requirements pursuant to [N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3](#)

In the coming days, the following information will be communicated to all families:

- Procedures for submitting requests for an all-remote learning option
- Procedures for submitting requests to transition from all-remote learning to in-person or hybrid learning during the school year, including the minimum amount of time a student must spend in all-remote learning prior to being eligible to transition to in-person or hybrid services
- Points of contact for questions and/or concerns

Along with the above information, surveys will be sent to all families in the coming days to gather data regarding the number of students whose families may choose to exercise the all-remote learning option. Responses to these surveys are non-binding and are exclusive of the information that will be gathered according to the submission of requests procedures outlined above. It is essential, though, that all families respond to these surveys as quickly as possible according to their plans for this option so that the district can adequately prepare for enrollment numbers in both the hybrid/in-person learning programs and the all-remote learning program.

In order for families to make informed decisions regarding this option, it is important to review the information regarding the in-person/hybrid learning scenarios detailed in the following sections.



Phased-In Approach to Reopening Schools: Overview

With the above [critical points of consideration](#) in mind, it is essential to structure our school reopening plan schedules according to the establishment of a phased-in approach that provides for incremental and health data-informed parameters to be established within each phase. Following a structured transition phase, there will be multiple color-coded phases that will ultimately allow for our students and staff to follow a continuum of increasing in-person learning time while decreasing virtual learning time. Following the transition phase, movement across each subsequent phase will be determined following careful examination of the state of the health situation at the time in direct consultation with local and State health experts.



Transition Phase
Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is anticipated that the Transition Phase will last approximately four weeks.
Student Cohort Group Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two cohorts: Blue Cohort and Red Cohort. Each cohort will comprise approximately 50% of the typical student class size. All efforts will be made to place siblings within the same cohort so that their schedules align across grade levels/school buildings. Each cohort will spend part of its learning time in the school building and the other part of its learning time in virtual environments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u><i>Blue Cohort</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In-Person Learning</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tuesday and Thursday mornings.</i> <i>Virtual Learning</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.</i> <i>Throughout the school day on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.</i> <u><i>Red Cohort</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In-Person Learning</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Wednesday and Friday mornings.</i> <i>Virtual Learning</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Wednesday and Friday afternoons.</i> <i>Throughout the school day on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.</i>
Rationale Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the vast differences in how engaging in a physical learning environment will be for students compared to what it was last school year, it is important for a period of transition time to be built into the beginning of the school year that will allow for students to practice engagement in critical health and safety protocols, including the use of PPE, safe movement throughout classrooms and hallways, daily screening processes, and arrival/dismissal procedures. This period will also allow important time and opportunity for assessing and meeting social and emotional health needs. The consistency across each week of the days/times each student is in the school building will provide for consistency in scheduling for parents/guardians with regard to their own work schedules and child care needs, a critical point presented to the administration by parent/guardian representatives and staff representatives participating on the reopening committees.
Critical Health and Safety Protocol Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people within the school building, including staff and students, must wear face coverings at all times and will be provided with individualized desk/table shields. After due consultation with health experts, including the local Department of Health and the Paramus School District Physician, and after review and consideration of input from families and staff, it is clear that both the knowns and unknowns surrounding the means and ease of transmission of the virus dictate this approach at this time. All students are required to travel in school buses/vehicles and arrive at school each day wearing a face covering from home. An extra supply of face coverings will be available for students who need them. Staff members will wear provided masks and face shields. As per State guidelines, students and staff who cannot wear masks due to documented medical conditions will be accommodated on a case-by-case basis in a manner that will ensure continued health and safety requirements are met. Daily pre-screening health checks must be submitted for each student and staff member prior to entry into the school building. Social distancing guidelines will be in place for all areas, including classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, entrances/exits, school buses/vehicles, offices, and outdoor spaces. Shortened in-person learning schedules allow for lunch to be eaten outside of the in-person school day, thereby ensuring that in-person group eating does not occur in the school building (in alignment with existing health standards and guidelines with regard to in-person dining).



Orange Phase
Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The duration of the Orange Phase will be dependent upon health guidelines as dictated by the evolving health crisis. The dates of transition from this phase to any other phase will be determined after due consultation with local and State health experts and with advance notice to the entire school community.
Student Cohort Groups Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohorts remain the same as they were in the Transition Phase (Blue Cohort and Red Cohort). The amount of time spent in the school building will increase, but students will still physically interact only with those students with whom they physically interacted during the Transition Phase. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue Cohort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Person Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings. Virtual Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday afternoons. Throughout the school day on Wednesday. Red Cohort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Person Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday afternoons. Virtual Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings. Throughout the school day on Wednesday.
Rationale Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This phase allows for students to increase their amount of in-person learning time by adding two days to their in-school week while still interacting only with those students with whom they interacted during the Transition Phase. As was the case during the Transition Phase, the consistency across each week of the days/times each student is in the school building will provide for continued consistency in scheduling for parents/guardians with regard to their own work schedules and child care needs.
Critical Health and Safety Protocol Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All critical health and safety protocols in place during the initial four-week Transition Phase will remain in place throughout the Orange Phase, including the scheduling of time spent within the school building to allow for lunch to be eaten outside of the in-person school day.



Yellow Phase/Green Phase
Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The duration of both the Yellow Phase and Green Phase will be dependent upon health guidelines as dictated by the evolving health crisis. The dates of transition from each of these phases to any other phase will be determined after due consultation with local and State health experts and with advance notice to the entire school community.
Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essential components of all phases beyond the Transition Phase and the Orange Phase will be defined according to the particulars of the health crisis at those times and therefore cannot accurately be placed into particular phases at this time. However, it is clear that the following components will begin to be incorporated across these additional phases:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Continued increases in in-person instructional time and corresponding decreases in virtual instructional time, culminating in full in-person instructional days for students.</i>○ <i>The serving of lunch within the school day and school building.</i>○ <i>The potential for relaxed guidelines regarding social distancing and the use of PPE as dictated by health guidelines at the time.</i>