



March 3, 2021

Dear Paramus Community,

*I am beyond thrilled* to provide this community update to you! As you know, our Phase II learning model choice surveys have now been submitted. I know that each member of our school community has been eagerly awaiting these results in anticipation of learning which grade levels will be eligible to merge cohorts. For these eligible grade levels, in-person learners will **double** their time in school by switching from two days a week to four days a week. In order to safely make such a change happen in any grade level while our region is still considered to be “high risk” (Orange) for transmission of COVID-19, we focused on keeping in place the minimum six feet of distance that has been an instrumental component of keeping our students, staff, and families safe.

To that end, our administrative team and Buildings and Grounds staff have been working steadfastly on re-measuring all available space within each building. They have also worked on creatively restructuring existing classrooms to ensure the greatest number of students possible could participate in in-person learning while still maintaining social distancing. Our Transportation Department has been reviewing and restructuring, as needed, every bus route to ensure that all children opting for district transportation will continue to have a seat when the eligible grade levels merge cohorts. Our amazing teaching staff has been incredibly flexible and creative in reimagining their instructional spaces to provide as many of their students as possible the option to increase their amount of time in the classroom.

As a reminder, when we entered the preparation process for determining the scope of Phase II, we were hopeful that at least **some** of our grade levels would be eligible to merge cohorts. However, due to the extraordinary work of our incredible educational team, I am excited to share with you that **most** of our grade levels are now eligible for cohort merging. As a result, **in-person learners within the grade levels highlighted in green below will attend school four days a week starting Tuesday, March 9.**

Grade Level	Merge Cohorts?
Kindergarten	Yes
Grade 1	Yes
Grade 2	Yes
Grade 3	Yes
Grade 4	Yes
Grade 5	No
Grade 6	Yes
Grade 7	Yes
Grade 8	No
Grade 9	Yes
Grade 10	Yes
Grade 11	Yes
Grade 12	Yes



## Important Potential Phase Modifications

### Grades 5 & 8

While Grades 5 and 8 are currently not eligible to merge cohorts due to capacity constraints within both middle schools, the middle school team is continuing to work on developing alternative solutions to increase the amount of in-person learning for these grade levels as much as possible. **Any alternative solutions for these grade levels will be communicated once they are identified.**

*\*\*In the meantime, Grades 5 & 8 will continue to follow the hybrid cohort model as they have been.\*\**

### Virtual Mondays

Since the Phase II and Phase III plans were built upon a foundation that anticipated only a limited number of grade levels would be eligible to merge cohorts, Virtual Mondays were scheduled to remain during Phase II and only change to in-person instruction days during Phase III. However, in light of the positive change in circumstances, we are now exploring the possibility of phasing out Virtual Mondays **prior** to Phase III.

**Please know for your planning purposes that Virtual Mondays will remain in place for at least the first two weeks of Phase II while the possibility of a change remains under discussion. Additional updates will be sent prior to any such change taking place.**

### Phase III

As discussed in my [February 27, 2021 Community Update](#), our region continues the positive trend toward reducing its COVID-19 transmission risk level from Orange (High Risk) to Yellow (Moderate Risk). If this trend remains consistent, we could see Phase III begin relatively soon. If, however, it becomes apparent that our region's progression toward Yellow (Moderate Risk) is slowing, we will further examine any adjustments to our Phase II/III protocols to continue to meet our goal of safely increasing the amount of in-person learning time available to our students as per the health data at the time.

Also, the administrative team will continue to evaluate the feasibility of extending the in-person learning schedule to full days for at least some, if not all, grade levels during Phase III. Again, any changes to the length of the in-person school day would lead to an additional window of time for all families to switch learning models before such a change is implemented.

As always, thank you for your continued support and collaboration. And again, a **huge** thank you to our incredible faculty, administration, and staff for **always** putting the needs of the Paramus children first. This exciting start to Phase II is a monumental leap toward restoring normalcy for our school community.

Sincerely,

Sean Adams  
Superintendent of Schools