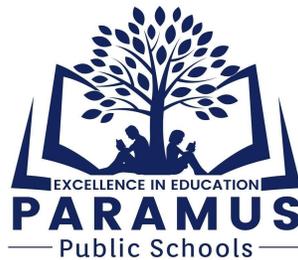


Office of the Superintendent
145 Spring Valley Road
Paramus, NJ 07652



Sean P. Adams
(201) 261-7800, ext. 3000
sadams@paramusschools.org

September 1, 2020

Dear Paramus Community,

At last night's meeting, the Board of Education approved a delay to the start of the *in-person* school year to **November 9, 2020**. While circumstances dictated the need for this adjustment, it is nonetheless an extremely disappointing turn of events for our students, parents/guardians, administration, faculty, staff, and Board of Education. In addition to the communications I have received from parents/guardians expressing their hopes for a quick return to in-person learning, I have received an equally significant number of emails and calls from our teaching and support staff expressing the same shared desire: that our schools are opened for in-person learning as quickly as possible.

As you are aware, our Restart and Recovery Committees have been steadfastly working throughout the summer on developing plans to not only meet the guidelines and standards contained within the NJDOE's "[The Road Back](#)" document, but also to exceed them. Our administrative, secretarial, information technology, and custodial/grounds staff have worked tirelessly to ensure our buildings are fully prepared so that we all could welcome our students back at the beginning of the year. Many of our teachers have been spending these past few weeks setting up their classrooms to ensure the learning environment is warm, welcoming, and nurturing for our students.

However, the seemingly relentless nature of this pandemic, and the corresponding required changes in statute, policy, and Federal/State directives, continue to present new and often untimely challenges to us all. A clear example of such a challenge has been the recent increase in the number of school districts in our area that have also had to delay the start of their own in-person school years, a situation that requires many employers to provide parents/guardians who live in those districts with leaves under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#). This scenario is just one representative example of a number of very recent and different unforeseen circumstances that have resulted in an untenable situation for our schools in Paramus that makes it impossible to meet our staffing demands ahead of our original planned in-person reopening of schools. Therefore, although the district continues to meet all existing NJDOE health and safety guidelines for reopening, the district is currently unable to meet the staffing levels required to implement these guidelines and ensure proper monitoring and supervision for health and safety.

Our revised date for a return to in-person education--November 9, 2020--was identified based on the projected amount of time that would be needed to hire additional staff and complete the various background checks required by State law. However, we remain steadfast in our commitment to bringing our students back into the school buildings as quickly as possible. Therefore, we are prioritizing meeting our staffing needs so that our student populations that benefit the most from in-person learning may be able to return to the school buildings earlier than November 9. We will continue to keep you informed of any updates related to potential adjustments to the return date.

Additional information related to the revised date for the start of the in-person school year, including examples of the schedules for elementary, middle, and high school, is included in the [Reopening Update Presentation](#) provided to the public at last night's Board of Education meeting.



Please carefully review the following points of clarification:

- The start date of the **in-person** school year has been changed to **Monday, November 9, 2020**.
- The [2020-2021 school calendar](#) is unchanged. The first day of virtual learning for all students remains **Thursday, September 3**.
- Information regarding individual student schedules will be sent to families by the principals by the end of the day on **Tuesday, September 1**.
- The virtual school day has been structured to adapt, as appropriate, the regular in-person learning experience to the virtual learning experience. As a result, the virtual school day will generally follow the start and end times of the regular in-person school day.
- The structure of the virtual learning school day will provide for a learning experience for all students that will involve, as developmentally appropriate for each age group, an enhanced level of synchronous learning time.
- The need for flexibility with individual student circumstances will continue to be incorporated into the instructional model and will be addressed on an individual basis.

As always, thank you for your patience, understanding, and support as we continue to work toward safely reopening our schools. We eagerly look forward to greeting our students in the school buildings.

Sincerely,

Sean Adams
Superintendent of Schools