



Superintendent's Report August 12, 2021

Summer learning continues in the two August programs taking place at Tenakill Middle School. In the STEM program, students are preparing to participate in a Cardboard Boat Regatta! Students have been investigating the science and mathematical principles that impact the speed and the efficiency of a boat. After researching and investigating these principles, students use their knowledge and creativity in creating an individual vessel to test and race at the Haworth Swim Club. In the Art & Literacy program, students are exploring characterization and are creating their own comic book. They are learning about key story elements, how authors use these traits to create real characters, and how artists panel, ink and color the comic book frames. These enriching summer programs are a wonderful way for students to practice science, math, writing, and to create art!

On August 2, 2021, I sent an email to inform all Closter stakeholders about our plans for reopening based on the New Jersey Department of Education document, *The Road Forward*. Thank you to the members of the School Reopening Committee for their review of *The Road Forward* and for their feedback on a full return to school for all Closter students. Yesterday, I sent an update to share the news that Governor Murphy has mandated mask-wearing for all students, staff and visitors to schools. I am hopeful that this extra layer of mitigation will keep our schools open throughout the year. I also encourage everyone who is eligible to be vaccinated to do so. Students who are 12 years of age and older can get vaccinated. Current quarantine rules state that vaccinated students will not have to quarantine, as long as they are asymptomatic, when exposed to a person who tests positive for COVID-19. This will ensure that students can continue attending in-person instruction.

This chart outlines how our two schools will operate for the start of the 2021-2022 school year:

	2021-2022
Full-Day Instruction	Yes
Face Coverings/Masks	Yes, as mandated by Governor Murphy's Executive Order 251
Social Distancing	3 feet, to the extent possible
Daily Screening Form	Yes. We expect that individuals will stay home when ill and get tested for COVID if experiencing COVID compatible symptoms .
A/B Cohorts	No
100% Virtual Option	No
Field Trips/Assemblies	If social distancing can be maintained
Lockers (5-8)	Only if social distancing can be maintained while students are at lockers
Small-Group Learning	Yes
Science Labs	In-person

Shared Supplies	Yes (Items will be cleaned with sanitizing wipes in between use, to the extent possible)
Increased hand washing/sanitizer	Yes
Increased Sanitation of the Buildings/Buses	Yes
Back to School Night	In-person; Masks will be required for all
Parent-Teacher Conferences	In-person; Masks will be required for all
Diagnostic COVID testing and Screening	COVID-19 testing will be offered weekly on Tuesdays in the upper loop at Hillside Elementary School. Anyone in the community is welcome to use these testing services.
Contact Tracing/Quarantine	Yes, quarantine is set by the local Board of Health and depends on vaccination status and transmission rates in the area.
Desk Shields	When necessary for close contact, such as during speech therapy sessions.
Nurses Configuration/Isolation Room	Yes
Emphasis on Ventilation/Air Purification	Yes

The New Jersey Department of Education will be requiring districts to administer the *Start Strong* assessment for English Language Arts grades 4-8, Mathematics grades 4-8, Algebra I, and in Science grade 6. These assessments will be in place of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) that were not given this past spring. The *Start Strong* assessments are intentionally brief (taking about 45-60 minutes) and will provide immediate results to teachers. The *Start Strong* assessments utilize three performance levels: “Strong Support May Be Needed”; “Some Support May Be Needed”; and “Less Support May Be Needed.” The assessments will be given between September 13, 2021, and October 22, 2021. Principals will provide more exact information about when students in grades 4-8 will be taking the Start Strong assessments.

We are excited for students’ return to school on September 2, 2021 and are busy preparing for a wonderful year ahead. Enjoy the last weeks of summer!

Vincent Mc Hale