

August 4, 2020

Dear Nutley Parents and Staff,

I write to you today with an important communication and update regarding the re-opening of the Nutley Public Schools this September.

As per guidance of the New Jersey Department of Education, in response to Governor Murphy's directive, the Nutley Public Schools must prepare a plan which includes the return to the school buildings in some capacity for this September. After many weeks of thoughtful collaboration with our administrative team, staff, students, and the community, via surveys and task force meetings, we have crafted a draft plan that we believe is the best possible option for a safe return to school following all of the current, available health and safety guidelines. While our goal is for students to fully be able to return to school, the challenges are many, and the wellbeing of our school community has to be our top priority. Therefore, the Nutley Public Schools reopening plan builds on a phased approach using a hybrid model of instruction that includes a combination of in-person and virtual learning. While we must start at a reduced student capacity in the buildings due to the on-going executive orders of the Governor, as public health allows, we will gradually increase our capacity in the school buildings by length of the school day and number of in-person days for all staff and students. The draft reopening plan was developed in consultation with our local and county public health experts, district physicians, and using the guidance of our architects and demographer. We listened to many voices and stakeholders and believe our cautious, systematic approach will yield the best results for effectively resuming in-person instruction.

We recognize that in-person instruction is not an option for some students and staff members who have increased health risks related to COVID-19 and that returning to in-person instruction is not possible at this time. Further, we know that some families simply are not comfortable sending their children back in person for different reasons. There is also a 100% virtual option.

[The full draft plan is available for review here.](#) **On Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 6:30 PM we will have a special virtual Board of Education meeting** to discuss the aspects of the plan, answer questions for the community, and review changes to district policy necessary to move forward. We hope that you will join us for the conversation. Please note that this draft is a "living document" that will continue to evolve throughout August as reopening approaches, and as we adapt to this new educational reality summarized below.

This blended plan of in-person and virtual instruction requires students to be in smaller cohort groups to minimize contact and allows the district to maintain the required social distancing in all schools and classes. While some students will attend school in person each day, and some will have full-time remote instruction, both groups of students will be afforded the same quality and scope of instruction and related services. Students in both groups will be required to adhere to length of school day requirements, attendance policies, and all other policies and expectations. All students will be afforded the opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities, in person or remotely as they are developed.

### **In-Person Instruction: Elementary Schools**

The elementary schools will operate with five days of instruction. Due to space constraints and overcrowding at most of our district schools, in conflict with capacity and social distancing requirements, this will include two consecutive single session in-person days of instruction with the remainder of the week virtual. In-person days will be held from 8:30am until 12:30pm. Kindergarten students will attend in-person for four days a week, either in an AM or PM session. As health and safety allows, we may be able to offer additional or full days for self-contained special education, English language learners, Preschool, and Kindergarten. We are also planning a potential option for child care at the elementary level on days when students are in-person at school and for Kindergarten that would extend the day until at least 4:00 PM.

Some may prefer to see the schedule as a visual, please refer to this draft schedule: [Elementary School Schedule](#)

### **In-Person Instruction: Middle School**

The middle school student body will be divided into thirds and will also operate on a single session schedule, beginning at 8:10 am and dismissing at 12:00 pm. The JHWMS student body will be divided into three groups and will operate on a single session schedule, on a rotating basis. One group will enter the building for in-person, while the other two groups will learn virtually on that day. Virtual learners will have assignments posted, and will have structured meetings with their teachers in the afternoon from 1pm to 3pm.

Students will attend in-person instruction every third day. For example, group 1 will attend in-person classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 for 45 minutes per class. The following day, group 2 will attend in-person classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 for 45 minutes per class, followed the next day by group 3. The process starts again on the fourth day with group 1 returning

to the building for classes 5, 6, 7 and 8. Students and teachers will focus on four classes for the 3 day instructional segment.

Safeguards are in place for social distancing, and increased passing time in the hallways. Information on instrumental and band, zero period as well as 7th grade orientation will be forthcoming.

Some may prefer to see the schedule as a visual, please refer to this draft schedule: [Middle School Schedule](#)

### **In-Person Instruction: High School**

Similar to the middle school hybrid schedule, the high school student body will be divided into three groups and will operate on a single session schedule, on a rotating basis. One group will enter the building for in-person, while the other two groups will learn virtually on that day. Virtual learners will have assignments posted, and be able to access the instructor during afternoon office hours. The in-person days will begin at 8:40am and students will be dismissed at 12:22pm.

Students will attend in-person instruction every third day. For example, group 1 will attend in-person classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 for 45 minutes per class. The following day, group 2 will attend in-person classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 for 45 minutes per class, followed the next day by group 3. The process starts again on the fourth day with group 1 returning to the building for classes 5, 6, 7 and 8. Students and teachers will focus on four classes for the 3 day instructional segment.

Safeguards are in place for social distancing, and increased passing time in the hallways. Information on instrumental and band, zero period as well as freshman orientation will be forthcoming.

Some may prefer to see the schedule as a visual, please refer to this draft schedule: [High School Schedule](#)

### **100% Virtual Option**

The state requires all public school districts to offer a 100% virtual option for students who do not wish to return in person. This model will include direct instruction and independent learning daily, consistent with a single session day. There will be virtual meetings to provide feedback and assess students.

While we surveyed families last week for their initial thoughts, we are asking you to commit to either in-person or virtual instruction no later than August 14th. Please select a learning option for each child on the Parent Portal at:

[www.fridayparentportal.com/nutley](http://www.fridayparentportal.com/nutley)

Additional specific information regarding academics, cleaning and disinfecting of spaces, safety and security, lunch, transportation, technology, and many other considerations are found in [the draft plan](#).

**A few important reminders:**

- **The first day of school for students is Tuesday September 8.** Temperature checks and screening protocols will be fully implemented prior to building entry. While you will receive additional information from your school principal to prepare you for these expectations, please remember that there is a travel advisory that requires New Jersey residents to self-quarantine for 14 days after visiting many states throughout the United States. The list continues to be updated and we ask that you be mindful of the timing as you enjoy the last few weeks of your summer. We don't want to turn your child away from the first day of school!
- All students will be required to wear masks throughout the day, unless there is a health concern while they are in the school buildings. We encourage you to have your students practice wearing their masks to increase their stamina over the next few weeks.

I cannot stress enough how grateful I am for all your support and participation during this planning process, as well as over the last several months. We believe that, while not perfect, our draft plan is well-thought-out and will allow staff and students to return safely to the buildings and to high quality education. I will look forward to your feedback on August 11, and as we continue to monitor and adjust to refine our plan and protocols.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Julie Glazer.