

MAYWOOD

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District Update – June 29, 2020

Good evening, I hope all is well. As noted in my email of last week, we will begin the process of solidifying plans for September now that the guidance document has been shared by the Governor. I also noted that the document will most likely change many times before September and therefore we have to move patiently with this plan. Today we saw the shift of an original plan for indoor dining restrictions to be lessened to now a reversal. We expect the same with decisions as they relate to September. However, please note that we are ahead of the game as evidenced by our Thinking Forward Plan that was formulated and shared with our District a few months ago. We will absolutely put together the reopening task force to add to our other committees and we will have a tentative plan in place for all families by August 10th as per the requirement of a month prior to the opening of school. However, I offer you the memo I sent to our State leaders today to again urge them to act.

I write again to you not out of frustration with the County office's efforts but instead simply to see if there is another venue to make our voices heard with you. I understand the relevance of twitter and the press conferences with the powerpoints, but the compilation of hundreds of questions for posting on twitter and the chatter to and from the DOE via twitter and "shout outs" may increase chances of more followers but it is simply not what is needed now on an important topic. Quite honestly I am at a loss. I believe my sentiment is shared by many and we are in need of an avenue that you may suggest to voice it with you.

I am simply at a loss as to how the one and only one relevant question/ topic that none of us can answer but have been in search of since March, was not found within the 104 page document that was circulated. I am also at a loss by how this document was in essence approved by Superintendents as one of our colleagues, the Supt from Mount Olive, was at the press conference in essence representing us. The one topic I speak of is a medical based question and it is simply what do we do when a student, staff member, visitor, group or extension to the people just listed tests positive during the school year? Not one sentence was dedicated to this other than referencing communication with local and state health officials. That is simply not enough and it falls in to the same category of "not enough" as found in the directions for Summer ESY being that of referring to day camp guidelines.

Those of us in education are many things to many people. What we are not are medical professionals. We can and should make decisions on how we structure our schedules and classrooms for the fall and how we provide lunch and how we sanitize our computer equipment and provide specials in this environment. We cannot however make district decisions regarding a pandemic that relates to medical requirements. We must have clear requirements, not guidelines, when it comes to the Fall and what we are required to do when we get a call at 10 pm from a 2nd grader's mom saying that her child tested positive at the local redi-med a few minutes ago. This cannot be a decision that is left up to each district as we are dealing with a medical issue unlike any seen before that set us back in ways never thought imaginable. Simply put, we need action from the state government and DOE for this and this alone right now. Our leaders have had almost five months to prepare for this one question that we need the answer to.

It is safe to say that since the doors closed on March 17th all of us have been planning for September. There is no doubt that the committees that we are now required to formulate as of last Friday have been formulated months ago and have been meeting consistently since then. We have gone through iterations of scenarios that we have cross checked with colleagues and consulted with reopening plans from other states that were released last month. Bergen County is currently in the midst of meeting with the subcommittees we set up regarding scheduling, PPE, macro issues and curriculum and all we are asking for is the medical related answer that was elusive in a 104 page document. This harkens back to the frenzy that we were in at the beginning of the closure when again there were no answers that were verifiable as to what we should do when a positive case was brought to our attention then when we thought the closure was to be two weeks. Instead we all scrambled and asked local health officials, the county office and anyone who would listen. I am not a complainer by heart and I am a big believer in the mantra of show me a solution, not the problem. I think it's long overdue that we get that solution from our leaders as undoubtedly we have worked to keep the problems away from them since March.

This is too critical to be placed into the "knucklehead" category or the "we anticipate guidance to be forthcoming" category. I ask for any and all suggestions to meet this head on and to provide a venue that we can collectively seek answers for our families who entrust us each day with their kids.

As always, thanks

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