

Springfield Public Schools

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July 15, 2020

Dear Springfield Students, Families, Staff, and Community Members:

I hope you are enjoying your summer and staying safe and healthy. I'm writing this letter to update you on our planning for the 2020-2021 school year.

In my first week in Springfield Public Schools, many community members reached out to me with offers to volunteer to serve on advisory committees related to planning for the 2020-2021 school year. It was wonderful to see Springfield's spirit of volunteerism!

In order to accomplish this challenging task, we have created multiple committees to gather perspectives and learn from our stakeholders. At the school level, subcommittees have begun to meet and are looking at specific grade levels and school communities. Their feedback will be shared with the district-level committee, which will be responsible for operationalizing the plan. An executive committee, made up of community members, parents, teachers, and school and district leaders will review the ideas presented and provide guidance to assist in moving the plan forward.

The planning process has been developed using the guidance document developed by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), [The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education](#), to frame the many decisions that we will be making as we plan to support learning in September 2020.

We recognize there are many voices and experiences that we may not be hearing. That is why it is critical that our families share their thoughts and concerns regarding in-person instruction, and we are asking that families complete the [Springfield Reopening: Family and Community Survey](#) by Tuesday, July 22, 2020.

As we move forward, there are two priorities that are guiding our work.

First, the district will closely adhere to specific health-related guidelines presented in the NJDOE guidance document and that continue to be developed by health authorities. Such guidelines include:

- Requiring all staff and students to wear masks unless specific medical conditions require specific accommodations;
- Designing instructional spaces based on space and physical distancing;
- Reviewing all facilities for ventilation and identify opportunities for outdoor learning areas; and
- Developing specific protocols for regular healthcare screening and contact tracing.

Second, the district plan will be a "flex" model, allowing for online and in-person instruction. We are prioritizing the ability for students to access high-quality instruction regardless of

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whether they are physically present in the school. To accomplish this, our committees and leaders are being given the following expectations:

- Designing learning experiences that engage and challenge students;
- Developing consistent plans and expectations for teacher and student communication;
- Providing equitable learning experiences with consideration of individual student needs, with an understanding that every student has different needs
- Prioritizing social emotional supports; and
- Considering opportunities to expand and support home-school learning connections.

Since I arrived, I have received a wide variety of parent emails representing a wide range of perspectives related to reopening our schools. I have appreciated the feedback, and I look forward to continued communication.

As noted in my first letter, we will have to make difficult decisions based upon the guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control, and in consultation with local officials. Our first priority is the health of our children, staff, and community as we work to develop the best options for our schools.

Sincerely,

Rachel Goldberg

Rachel Goldberg
Superintendent of Schools

