

Chesterfield Township School District

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Dear Chesterfield Elementary School Community,

The first day of the 2021-2022 School Year grows closer with each passing day and the excitement is beginning to build for the start of the new year. Hopefully you are enjoying the summer break and time with your family.

As we hit the mid-point of summer, I want to take this opportunity to provide an update on our planning for the 2021-2022 school year. I have organized this letter by topic which are highlighted and in bold print.

Health & Safety

The pandemic is not behind us just yet, and we plan to continue to implement strategies to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff as we begin the process of returning to normal operations. Several of our health and safety protocols from last year will remain in place for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. For example, we will continue to regularly reinforce proper hand hygiene routines and respiratory etiquette, maximize physical distancing whenever possible, maintain strict cleaning and disinfecting protocols, quarantine positive cases and close contact cases, and provide remote instruction for students who have been quarantined.

We have learned so much over the last year and that knowledge combined with guidance from the Department of Health, we are eliminating some of our health and safety protocols. For example, we will discontinue the use of the Daily Health Form and temperature checks. The school community has demonstrated its willingness to comply with protocol, keeping students home and staff remaining home when exhibiting any COVID- related symptoms, which in turn has kept Chesterfield a safe place. We will no longer quarantine entire classes, but will quarantine based on the new guidance of any person being within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more of a positive case.

We are preparing for the return of all students for a full day of instruction, therefore we are adjusting arrival and dismissal procedures to accommodate the increased number of students in the building. We did learn a lot from last year, and we will be incorporating some of those lessons learned from arrival and dismissal procedures due to the pandemic. We will also begin to share certain materials again such as reopening our library for book circulation. We are returning classroom furniture such as tables and flexible seating that was removed last year while adhering to health and safety guidelines.

As the pandemic continues to change almost daily, we will continue to adjust as needed based on the recommendations of our health professionals, specifically, the Department of Health. The New Jersey Department of Health worked collaboratively with the New Jersey Department of Education to publish a guidance document entitled [The Road Forward](#). The Road Forward provides school districts with guidance on opening schools safely for all students. The first and only version of The Road Forward was published the last week of June. Currently that document continues to be our guide from the Department of Health. Since the publication of The Road Forward, the CDC has published guidance for schools and revised that guidance very recently. It is expected that the NJDOH will revise The Road Forward in the near future based on the recommendations of the CDC.

One of the main health and safety protocols to be addressed in the revised guidelines is the use of masks. The Board of Education discussed this topic in detail at the July BOE meeting, and we are currently awaiting the new guidance from the DOH on masking in schools. The Board expressed a commitment to make a final decision on the use of masks following the release of the new guidance.

I want to be clear: everything we are planning for September is based on all students and staff returning to full days of school, Monday through Friday, with lunch served. This has been the direction of the district since June, and nothing has changed.

Board of Education Policy

At the May BOE Meeting, the Board of Education made progress regarding one of their goals to ensure Board policy is properly written and fully addresses the needs of the district. The Board switched policy providers and is now working with Strauss Esmay for policy development. Strauss Esmay is a common name in BOE policy throughout New Jersey and the BOE will continue with this goal as they work to review every policy and regulation over the next year. The [new policy manual](#) has been published on the district website for your reference.

New Staff

The end of the school year and summer months are the time to ensure all positions are properly staffed. We are currently working to fill a few staff positions, but I am very pleased to announce that as of the end of July all faculty positions have been filled. We are happy to welcome the following new staff to the CES Team:

- Amber Colville – Special Education
- Gabriela Lestino – Art Teacher
- Reannon Lilly - Special Education

We have also been successfully filling several Lunch/Recess Aide positions in anticipation of all students being back in the building. Although not a new staff member, I do want to announce that Mr. Mazzoni has returned from his leave and is busy getting ready for September.

Back to School Night

If you haven't noticed, Back to School Night is planned for Thursday, September 9th which is also an early dismissal day. We are currently finalizing the plan for Back to School Night to provide parents with an in-person option as well as a remote option. We are also planning the evening to limit

sessions that will prevent overcrowding in classrooms. Details about Back to School Night will be sent out in August, but don't forget to put it on your calendar for Thursday, September 9th.

2021-2022 School Year Calendar

At the June BOE meeting, the Board ratified a new agreement with the Chesterfield Township Education Association. The new agreement includes two additional in-service days for staff during the school year. As a result, the 2021-2022 school year calendar has been revised to include these two additional in-service days and was approved at the July 21, 2021 BOE Meeting. You can access the 2021-2022 SY calendar [here](#). In the new calendar, the first day of school is Wednesday, September 8th.

English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum

We are excited for the implementation of the new ELA curriculum. Mrs. May-Sivieri, our Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, worked closely with a dedicated committee of teachers to rewrite the ELA curriculum last year. Starting in September we will be implementing the new curriculum. Over the next few months parents will be provided with additional information about the new curriculum and our teachers will be participating in training and planning sessions to ensure a successful implementation.

As the first day of school approaches, additional information will be published in preparation of the start of the new school year. Enjoy the remaining month of summer and keep an eye out for notifications during the month of August.

Sincerely,

Scott Heino

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