



**School Messenger Communications (Reentry and COVID Updates)
Dr. Lisa M. Antunes, Superintendent of Schools**

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December 22, 2020 - Jan 4 - Jan 8 School Schedule

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

I hope everyone enjoyed our snow day last week. I appreciate the email messages and thoroughly enjoyed the pictures some of you shared with me. I loved seeing how you and your families chose to spend the day. As we look forward to our winter break, I would like to wish

our students, parents, and staff a relaxing, peaceful, and laughter-filled holiday. The year 2020 was tumultuous as we all navigated through months of uncertainty on so many levels. While it looks like there may be some relief in sight with this week's news of the roll out of a COVID-19 vaccine, our slow journey toward the comfort of our typical routines will take a bit more time. The next few months will offer us insights into what we may expect as we enter the Spring season.

As individuals and caretakers, it can be mind-boggling to determine the best path to balancing life during a pandemic. With that in mind and after discussions with stakeholders, the decision has been made to learn virtually following the hybrid schedule during the week of January 4 through January 8. This decision, just as all others, was made with the interest of health and safety for students and staff in mind and will allow for additional time for those who may need to quarantine after the holidays.

It bears repeating that guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that the safest way to celebrate the winter holidays is to do so at home with the people with whom you live. Along with the CDC, we encourage our school community to continue to follow the CDC's safeguards.

We remain committed to in-person instruction and, at this time, barring any unforeseen circumstances, we expect to return to our hybrid schedule on Monday, January 11. For those who chose the hybrid option for marking period 2, if your child(ren) chose to remain all virtual after winter break, s/he/they are expected to return to his/her/their hybrid schedule on Monday, January 11. Should the Central West region of the state hit the red zone, as outlined in the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Activity Level Report, please know that our message will be a bit different.

Additionally, please note that food distribution will be suspended from January 4 through January 8 and will resume on Monday, January 11. If you are experiencing a hardship regarding food, please reach out to Kathy DeGregorio at kmajordegregorio@https.us for assistance.

As always, thank you for your continued support and patience. Cheers for a very happy, healthy, and restful holiday season. We look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year!

Be well!

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.

December 4, 2020 - Reopen Hybrid Instruction 12.7.20

Good Morning Staff and HTPS Community,

I truly hope that everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving and the long weekend that followed. While quiet and not as exciting as usual, I found that there was much for which to remain thankful. I am sure everyone is anxiously waiting for information on a decision to return to the hybrid model or to remain all virtual on Monday, December 7.

While the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) weekly [COVID-19 Activity Level Report](#) indicates a high activity level in the Central West region of the state, which includes Hillsborough, school-based transmission remains low across the state. **With this in mind and in consultation with the district's school physician and the Hillsborough Township Health Department, we have made the decision that starting on Monday, December 7, 2020, the district will return to hybrid instruction for those who selected the hybrid option for the second marking period. At this time, we anticipate following this schedule through Wednesday, December 23, 2020. Additionally, daily schedules, transportation, and food services will revert back to the original plan prior to last week's transition to virtual learning on 11.20.2020.** Look for more information from your child(rens) building administrator.

Remember that the virtual model remains an option for those students currently receiving hybrid instruction and will be an option through December 23. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, all hybrid students will be expected to return to school on Monday, January 4, 2021. Students who chose the virtual model of instruction for marking period 2 must remain virtual through the end of the second marking period (February 1, 2021). If you are a family who chose the hybrid option and want to move your child from hybrid to virtual for the remainder of the marking period, please contact your building principal.

Over the winter break, we will continue to evaluate the data based on the COVID-19 Activity Level Report, as well as other data available in our community at that time, to determine our return-to-school plans for Monday, January 4, 2021.

Please note that current [guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) suggests that the safest way to celebrate the upcoming holidays is to celebrate at home with the people with whom you live. I implore you to consider this guidance when making plans. In addition, if your family plans include travelling to anywhere on the [New Jersey Department of Health advisory list](#), students and staff members must quarantine for 14 days upon return to New Jersey. It is very important that everyone in our community heed this guidance in order to keep our staff and students safe. Please note that a negative COVID-19 test will not eliminate the need for quarantine. If a student has to quarantine, s/he/they may log in remotely to his/her/their classroom.

Along with the holiday guidelines, we also encourage our school community to continue following the CDC's other safeguards, such as:

- Stay home when you are sick;
- Wash hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds;
- Cover coughs and sneezes and properly dispose of tissues;
- Limit close contact with people who are sick and do not share food, drinks and utensils;
- Practice social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart);
- Wear a face covering in public settings; and
- Continue to monitor your health for symptoms.

We will continue to evaluate our status based upon all data, including the COVID-19 Activity Level Reports that are released every Thursday, data available in our school community and the community-at-large to determine our ability to remain in the hybrid schedule through December 23, as well as our return-to-school plans for Monday, January 4, 2021 and beyond. Please be mindful that, given the current situation and indicators available, it is likely that decisions to shut down classes, programs, individual grades/schools, or the entire district may be made at a moment's notice and may change from day to day. Therefore, I encourage you to have alternate plans in place should this occur. Of course, I will make every effort to notify the staff and the community as soon as possible in each situation.

Please know that this decision was made after very thoughtful, careful consideration and consultation. I am well aware that this decision will not be a welcome one for all, however, at this time, I also believe that the benefits of returning to school outweigh the risks.

Your support and cooperation are truly appreciated. Please remain vigilant, but sensible, in your approach to dealing with this health concern. Should you have any questions about this situation, please feel free to contact your building principal or school nurse.

Be well,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

November 20, 2020 - All Virtual 11.23.20 through 12.4.20

Good Morning Staff and HTPS Community,

It is with mixed feelings that I write this communication. The last several days have been fraught with change and uncertainty as the COVID-19 numbers continue to rise across New Jersey. In all of my communications to you throughout this pandemic, I have said that each decision we make has been based on the relevant data within our school district and our region. While we have no evidence of school-based transmission (thanks to the vigilance of our school community), the new regional data is not good. Yesterday (Thursday, November 19), the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) released the weekly [COVID-19 Activity Level Report](#). The report separates the state into different regions and provides a COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI) for each region. Unfortunately, due to the very high case rate in the Central West region of the state, which includes Hillsborough, our region is now considered to be an area of HIGH activity. The NJDOH suggests that districts should consider implementing fully remote learning if a region is an area of high activity. A high activity level requires an elevated level of vigilance with regard to who can attend or work in our schools in terms of potential exposure to those infected with the virus. Furthermore, given the high rate of transmission in the community, it is more likely that we would see an increased number of cases in schools if we do not implement remote learning, overloading both our contact tracers and the Township Department of Health.

With this in mind and in consultation with the district's school physician and the Hillsborough Township Health Department, we have made the decision that starting on Monday, November 23, 2020, the district will initiate our full-day virtual model of instruction for all students (as described beginning on page 70 of [Hillsborough's Road Back Plan](#)). At this time, we anticipate remaining closed through at least December 4, 2020. We will reevaluate that date based on the COVID-19 Activity Level Report that will be released on Thursday, December 3, as well as other data available in our community at that time. For your planning purposes, given the current situation and indicators available (current rate of community spread, upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, etc.), it is unlikely that we will be moved back from high activity to moderate activity by December 4.

During this time of virtual instruction, the school buildings will be open, however certificated staff may work from home if they choose to do so. Community entry into schools will be limited; community members must call ahead to make appointments to gain entry to schools. Moreover, all athletics and in-person extracurricular activities are suspended as of Monday, November 23. Athletic events will subsequently follow NJSIAA guidelines. Finally, all external use of facilities applications will be suspended pending further guidance. More information will be forthcoming from your building principals regarding daily schedules, including vo-tech, as well as food distribution.

Please note that new guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that the safest way to celebrate Thanksgiving is to celebrate at home with the people with whom you live. I implore you to consider this guidance when planning your holiday. In addition, if your family plans include travelling to anywhere on the New Jersey Department of Health advisory list, students and staff members must quarantine for 14 days upon return to New Jersey. It is very important that everyone in our community heed the new guidance in order to keep our staff and students safe. Please note that a negative COVID-19 test will not eliminate the need for quarantine. If a student has to quarantine, s/he/they may log in remotely to his/her/their classroom.

Along with the Thanksgiving guidelines, we also encourage our school community to continue following the CDC's other safeguards, such as:

- Stay home when you are sick;
- Wash hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds;
- Cover coughs and sneezes and properly dispose of tissues;
- Limit close contact with people who are sick and do not share food, drinks and utensils;
- Practice social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart);
- Wear a face covering in public settings; and
- Continue to monitor your health for symptoms.

A special shout out to our school nurses and Siobhan Spano and her staff at the Department of Health who have been completing contact tracing and responding to inquiries from staff and the community.

Please know that this decision was made after very careful consideration and consultation. I am well aware that this decision will not be a welcome one for all. Moreover, we understand that virtual learning is not ideal in many ways. However, we must make decisions based on what is best for our overall community. We appreciate your support and cooperation. Please remain vigilant but sensible in your approach to dealing with this health concern. Should you have any questions about this situation, please feel free to contact the building principal or school nurse.

Have a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving!

Be well,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

October 14, 2020 - Fourth COVID-19 Case at ARIS

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that a fourth student at Auten Road Intermediate School has tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The District is coordinating closely with public health officials and following CDC, state, and local health department guidance in order to ensure the health and safety of our community.

Please be assured that this case represents a very small number of our student enrollment and seem to be stemming from outside activities unrelated to our schools. It is important to note that you would already have been contacted by the our local health officer if you were in contact with the individuals who tested positive. **We cannot stress the importance of following the six-foot distancing protocol and wearing facial coverings. These are important parameters that will assist in determining whether or not quarantining may be necessary.**

Cleaning and disinfecting of all exposed areas will be completed as appropriate. The school is also taking precautions to prevent the introduction and spread of viruses and other germs and is cleaning frequently touched surfaces daily. The status of this situation is fluid, and we are monitoring it closely.

We understand the level of concern regarding COVID-19. We encourage parents and students to continue following the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) promoted safeguards, such as:

- Staying home when you are sick;
- Washing hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds;
- Covering coughs and sneezes and properly disposing of tissues;
- Limiting close contact with people who are sick and not sharing food, drinks and utensils;
- Practicing social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart);
- Wearing a face covering while in school; and
- Continuing to monitor your health for symptoms.

As always, we appreciate our community's support and cooperation. You can assist us by remaining sensible but vigilant in your approach in dealing with this health concern. We cannot stress the importance of reporting positive tests or contact with a person/people you know to be a positive case to the Hillsborough Township Health Department. Should you have any questions about this situation, please feel free to contact Auten Road Intermediate School school nurse, Mrs. Valerie Newman (vnewman@https.us). Below are some resources that might be helpful.

RESOURCES

[NJDOH COVID-19 Information for Communities and the General Public](#)

[Get the Facts about Coronavirus](#)

[COVID-19 Testing Overview](#)

[Symptoms of COVID-19 Virus](#)

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Superintendent of Schools

October 13, 2020 - Update on COVID-19 Cases at ARIS and HHS

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that several students (three at Auten Road Intermediate School and two at Hillsborough High School) have a tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The District is coordinating closely with public health officials and following CDC, state, and local health department guidance in order to ensure the health and safety of our community.

Please be assured that these cases represent a very small number of our student enrollment and seem to be stemming from outside activities unrelated to our schools. It is important to note that you would already have been contacted by the our local health officer if you were in contact with the individuals who tested positive.

Cleaning and disinfecting of all exposed areas will be completed as appropriate. The school is also taking precautions to prevent the introduction and spread of viruses and other germs and is cleaning frequently touched surfaces daily. The status of this situation is fluid, and we are monitoring it closely.

We understand the level of concern regarding COVID-19. We encourage parents and students to continue following the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) promoted safeguards, such as:

- Staying home when you are sick;

- Washing hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds;
- Covering coughs and sneezes and properly disposing of tissues;
- Limiting close contact with people who are sick and not sharing food, drinks and utensils;
- Practicing social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart);
- Wearing a face covering while in school; and
- Continuing to monitor your health for symptoms.

As always, we appreciate our community's support and cooperation. You can assist us by remaining vigilant but sensible in your approach to dealing with this health concern. We cannot stress the importance of reporting positive tests or contact with a person/people they know to be a positive case to the Hillsborough Township Health Department. Should you have any questions about this situation, please feel free to contact Hillsborough High School school nurse, Ms. Jennifer Amponin (jamponin@https.us), or Auten Road Intermediate School school nurse, Mrs. Valerie Newman (vnewman@https.us). Below are some resources that might be helpful.

RESOURCES

[NJDOH COVID-19 Information for Communities and the General Public](#)

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[Symptoms of COVID-19 Virus](#)

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Superintendent of Schools

October 8, 2020 - Report of Probable COVID-19 Case (HHS)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that a Hillsborough High School student has a probable positive case of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The District is coordinating closely with public health officials and following CDC, state, and local health department guidance in order to ensure the health and safety of our community.

Cleaning and disinfecting of all exposed areas will be completed as appropriate. The school is also taking precautions to prevent the introduction and spread of viruses and other germs and is cleaning frequently touched surfaces daily. The status of this situation is fluid, and we are monitoring it closely.

We understand the level of concern regarding COVID-19. We encourage parents and students to continue following the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) promoted safeguards, such as:

- Staying home when you are sick;
- Washing hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds;
- Covering coughs and sneezes and properly disposing of tissues;
- Limiting close contact with people who are sick and not sharing food, drinks and utensils;
- Practicing social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart);
- Wearing a face covering while in school; and
- Continuing to monitor your health for symptoms.

As always, we appreciate our community's support and cooperation. You can assist us by remaining vigilant but sensible in your approach to dealing with this health concern. We cannot stress the importance of reporting positive tests or contact with a person/people they know to be a positive case to the Hillsborough Township Health Department. Should you have any questions about this situation, please feel free to contact our school nurse, Ms. Jennifer Amponin (jamponin@https.us). Below are some resources that might be helpful.

RESOURCES

[NJDOH COVID-19 Information for Communities and the General Public](#)

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[Symptoms of COVID-19 Virus](#)

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Superintendent of Schools

October 8, 2020 - COVID-19 Important Information (HMS)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that two individuals at Hillsborough Middle School have tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). One of the individuals plays on the HMS girls' soccer team, therefore, that team has been put on hold for two weeks. The coaches and team players have been notified by the Athletic Department. The District is coordinating closely with public health officials and following CDC, state, and local health department guidance in order to ensure the health and safety of our community. It is important to note

that you would already have been contacted by the our local health officer if you were in contact with the individuals who tested positive. If your child is on the HMS girls' soccer team, your child is NOT PERMITTED to attend games or practices on any teams until the quarantine period is over.

Cleaning and disinfecting of all exposed areas / equipment will be completed as appropriate. The school is also taking precautions to prevent the introduction and spread of viruses and other germs and is cleaning frequently touched surfaces daily. The status of this situation is fluid, and we are monitoring it closely.

We understand the level of concern regarding COVID-19. We encourage parents and students to continue following the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) promoted safeguards, such as:

- Staying home when you are sick;
- Washing hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds;
- Covering coughs and sneezes and properly disposing of tissues;
- Limiting close contact with people who are sick and not sharing food, drinks and utensils;
- Practicing social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart);
- Wearing a face covering while in school; and
- Continuing to monitor your health for symptoms.

As always, we appreciate our community's support and cooperation. You can assist us by remaining vigilant but sensible in your approach to dealing with this health concern. We cannot stress the importance of reporting positive tests or contact with a person/people they know to be a positive case to the Hillsborough Township Health Department.

Should you have any questions about this situation, please feel free to contact Mr. Michael Davis, Athletic Director, at mdavis@htps.us or Mrs. Krista Williams, HMS School Nurse, at kwilliams@htps.us. Below are some resources that might be helpful.

RESOURCES

[NJDOH COVID-19 Information for Communities and the General Public](#)

[Get the Facts about Coronavirus](#)

[COVID-19 Testing Overview](#)

[Symptoms of COVID-19 Virus](#)

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

September 24, 2020 - Subject: HHS and HMS Fall Athletics

Good Afternoon HTPS Community,

We would like to take a moment to provide a brief update as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 process. As you may be aware, last week multiple programs at Hillsborough High School and one at Hillsborough Middle School were suspended due to either a positive test or a concern that individuals were in direct contact with a positive test. (The CDC defines direct contact as any individual within six feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes).

The initial recommendation from the Department of Health (DOH) was to suspend the program for 14 days and quarantine those individuals who were of concern to allow ample time to contact trace. While the situation may evolve quickly, as of this moment, only the high school boys' cross country program remains suspended until the nurse's office and DOH are able to complete the necessary contact tracing.

However, we are pleased to share that upon completion of additional contact tracing by our nursing department and the DOH, and based upon the findings, it was determined that, as of today, there is no risk of COVID-19 exposure resulting in the resumption of all other programs at Hillsborough High School and Hillsborough Middle School.

As a result of queries received regarding social distancing protocols focusing on our athletes, it is important to note that we will continue to follow the guidelines that have been in place. These guidelines include:

- Requiring athletes to wear face coverings when not participating in cardiovascular endurance activities,
- completing the Daily COVID-19 questionnaire form prior to practice, and
- temperature checks by the staff as athletes arrive.

Per guidelines from the NJSIAA, the use of locker rooms is not permitted. Athletes must arrive on the field or bus ready to go. Portable bathrooms will be available around campus.

Additionally, please be on the lookout for a transportation waiver via Google Survey from your respective coaches. This survey is intended for athletes who do not want to ride on the bus due to COVID-19. If an athlete chooses this option, s/he must be transported to and from the event. Athletes are not permitted to drive themselves or a group of friends at any time. To ensure social distancing protocols, the Transportation Department has planned for approximately 20 individuals on each bus instead of the typical 54 passengers. Opponents will adhere to similar, if not the same, protocols and procedures.

If any questions arise, please do not hesitate to reach out directly to the coach or Athletic Director Michael Davis.

Thank you,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes

Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

September 22, 2020 - Update on COVID-19 Cases (2)

This School Messenger includes important information that requires action to be taken. Please be sure to review the section on Free/Reduced Lunch Applications and New Federal Regulations for School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As we excitedly continue our preparations to welcome more students and staff into school next Tuesday (9.29.2020), there are several important topics that I would like to bring to your attention. Please take a moment to read through the message carefully.

Update on COVID Cases

As I shared at the September 21 Board of Education meeting, Mayor Doug Tomson issued a health advisory on Friday, September 18, citing several instances of probable positive COVID-19. We have been in frequent contact with the Township Health Officer and cannot emphasize enough the importance of providing accurate, timely, and complete information to the Health Department.

At this time, several individuals on recreation and school-sponsored sports teams have tested positive for COVID-19. If your child is on a team (recreation and/or school sponsored) that has been put on hold for any length of time, your child is **NOT PERMITTED** to attend games or practices on any teams until their quarantine period is over. Athletes should not be going out and practicing on other fields in Hillsborough or out of town. Doing so will not only jeopardize our athletic seasons but may also jeopardize our entire educational plan.

Very Important:

- If you have been notified by the health officer's office that your child is required to quarantine and you have chosen the hybrid model, your child **MAY NOT** attend school in person and should participate virtually until their quarantine period is over.
- Students who are required to quarantine and are scheduled to take the SATs this week should contact Ms. Jessica Smedley, Director of Guidance, who will roll over the registration to the October date.

Start of Hybrid Learning

For those who have chosen the hybrid model and are preparing to start either Tuesday, September 29 (red cohort), or Thursday, October 1 (gold cohort), here are a few reminders:

- Follow directives from your building principal regarding arrival and dismissal to school and other important information.
- Bring a water bottle with you. While the water fountains are not available, the water filling stations are ready for everyone.
- Students may eat a small, healthy snack following the guidelines set forth by the school. Snack time may be staggered within classrooms or eaten outside weather permitting.
- Wear a facial covering and bring an extra with you. There will be extra face coverings available in case of emergency.

Free and Reduced Lunch Applications

If you meet the criteria for free or reduced lunch and have not already done so, please be sure to complete the [free or reduced lunch application](#) (one application per family) and return it to your child's school nurse no later than Monday, October 12, 2020. If you do not have access to a printer, please email the main office of your child's school or email tklein@https.us. Please include your home address in all emails.

Action Required: New Federal Regulations for School Breakfast and Lunch Programs

The Hillsborough Township Public School District remains committed to serving healthy meals to all students. Due to changes in the National School Lunch Program, starting Tuesday, September 29, all students participating in the hybrid model will receive breakfast and lunch to take home for the week free of charge. Meals will be delivered to the classrooms of all students PreK through grade eight. If they choose to do so, high school students will be permitted to pick up their meals at dismissal.

All families (PreK through grade twelve) that chose the all virtual model will be able to pick up meals for the week at the main entrance of the high school on Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. This new regulation will run through December 31, 2020. Please complete this **form** to opt out of the program. **Note: You are required to complete the "opt out" option on the form if you do not wish to receive free meals.**

New Jersey Department of Human Services - Child Care Tuition Assistance Program

Please review the attached flyers ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) with information from the New Jersey Department of Human Services for families eligible for the new COVID-19 child care tuition program. The program will provide child care tuition assistance to New Jersey families with incomes up to \$75,000 that are in need of either full or part-time child care due to their child's remote learning schedule.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

September 18, 2020 - Update on COVID-19 Cases

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that several individuals on several sports or athletic teams (recreation and/or school sponsored) have tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The District is coordinating closely with public health officials and following CDC, state, and local health department guidance in order to assure the health and safety of our community. **If your child is on a team (recreation and/or school sponsored) that has been put on hold for any length of time, your child is NOT PERMITTED to attend games or practices on any teams until the quarantine period is over.**

Cleaning and disinfecting of all exposed areas / equipment will be completed as appropriate. The school is also taking precautions to prevent the introduction and spread of viruses and other germs and is cleaning frequently touched surfaces daily. The status of this situation is fluid, and we are monitoring it closely.

We understand the level of concern regarding COVID-19. We encourage parents and students to continue following the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) promoted safeguards, such as:

- Staying home when you are sick;
- Washing hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds;
- Covering coughs and sneezes and properly disposing of tissues;
- Limiting close contact with people who are sick and not sharing food, drinks and utensils;
- Practicing social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart);
- Wearing a face covering while in school; and
- Continuing to monitor your health for symptoms.

As always, we appreciate our community's support and cooperation. You can assist us by remaining vigilant but sensible in your approach to dealing with this health concern. We cannot stress the importance of reporting positive tests or contact with a person/people they know to be a positive case to the Hillsborough Township Health Department. Should you have any questions about this situation, please feel free to contact our Athletic Director, Mr. Davis. Below are some resources that might be helpful.

RESOURCES

[NJDOH COVID-19 Information for Communities and the General Public](#)
[Get the Facts about Coronavirus](#)

[COVID-19 Testing Overview](#)
[Symptoms of COVID-19 Virus](#)

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

September 1, 2020 - Childcare Survey/Update on Preparation of Buildings

Good Afternoon,

Happy September! We were overjoyed to welcome faculty and staff back into school this morning! I would like to take a moment to update the community on two important items:

1. Childcare Opportunities/Needs

We are working with several outside organizations to determine the feasibility of offering childcare for school-aged children for our families and staff (at your cost) while providing opportunities for students to work virtually within the childcare environment. Your answers to this [survey](#) will help us determine interest and need for these childcare services. Please note that at this time, busing will NOT be provided and parents are expected to drop off and pick up their child(ren). **Please remember to complete a separate form for each child by Friday, September 4.** We will update you on the outcome should it be determined that it is feasible to provide childcare services.

2. What is the status of cleaning and sanitizing, preventive maintenance on heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and purchasing of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the start of the school year?

In my address to staff this morning during their first inservice day, I shared that the district has implemented an enhanced cleaning and sanitizing process and has made a substantial investment in state-of-the-art cleaning equipment that meets the highest industry standards. Protective shields have been installed in office areas and fabricated individual desk shields will be distributed to staff, on an as needed basis, under the guidance of the Human Resources and Business Offices.

Hillsborough Township Public Schools has met or exceeded the minimum standards required as outlined by the New Jersey Department of Education's [The Road Back Plan](#). The district has invested over \$125,000 on PPE, disinfectants and sanitizers.

We have purchased significant quantities of surgical masks for adults and children, disposable and reusable face shields, gloves, gowns and goggles, including:

- Surgical masks for adults 23,000
- Surgical masks for children 10,000
- Disposable face shields 600
- Reusable face shields 200
- Gloves 650 (100 ct) boxes
- Gowns 250
- Goggles 700
- Plexiglass sneeze guards 111

With regard to disinfectants and sanitizing supplies, the district has acquired the following items thus far:

- Disinfectant wipes 35,600
- Microfiber rags 1,500
- Disinfectant concentrate 180 gallons
- Hand sanitizer and stands 579 gallons
- Electrostatic sprayers 14

These supplies have been distributed across the district; more quantities are being ordered, as necessary.

With regard to ventilation and HVAC, as outlined in the NJDOE guidance, as of yesterday morning, our staff had completed more than 95% of our scheduled preventive maintenance on all uni-vent heaters, air conditioning units, and window air conditioning units, including filter changes, in preparation for opening of schools. All preventive maintenance will be completed by the end of this week. Rooftop units have been cleaned and sanitized for improved air flow and better overall unit performance. Air purifiers and fans have been purchased for use in areas that may need additional ventilation.

While we acknowledge that the start of the school year is atypical, and as we excitedly countdown to the first day of school for students on Friday, many things remain the same - first day jitters, children excited to meet their classmates and teachers, new backpacks, shiny shoes, and smiling faces!

COVID-19 continues to change the landscape for teaching and learning. We look to the upcoming school year with a sense of excitement, hope for new beginnings, and a return to a sense of normalcy in the near future.

Finally, enjoy the final days of summer and the upcoming Labor Day weekend!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Superintendent of Schools

August 21, 2020 - Clarification on Decision to Delay Hybrid Learning

Dear HTPS Community,

Subsequent to my Tuesday, August 18, message outlining the decision to delay the implementation of our hybrid learning opportunities, opting for a virtual only opening for the first three weeks of school, additional questions have been raised and we were made aware of some misinformation that seems to be circulating throughout the community.

While the message on Tuesday alluded to the reasoning for delaying the hybrid implementation, we want to be very clear that the sole reason for doing so was due to concerns surrounding student supervision. As districts throughout NJ move to the virtual option to begin the year, as permitted by the Governor, an increased number of teachers are experiencing childcare issues because their home districts are closed for in-person instruction. We realize that more districts (in which our teachers reside) are making announcements daily and that staff who previously made childcare arrangements for their school-aged children could be hard-pressed to make alternative arrangements on short notice. We believe that providing the three-week delay will increase the likelihood of a successful transition to our hybrid option for those who selected it. Additionally, it is important to note that this is a significant challenge that all school districts are facing, including Hillsborough. In fact, if anyone is interested in serving as a substitute teacher, please reach out to our human resources department or visit our [website](#).

On Tuesday, our district physician, Dr. Bert Mandelbaum, gave an informative presentation to staff about COVID-19 School Considerations including mitigation to avoid further spread. He was joined by Ms. Siobhan Spano, Township Health Officer, to answer staff questions. We hope that you will take some time to view the [presentation](#) and that you find it useful. Please note that Dr. Mandelbaum and Ms. Spano stated that, even though the rate of positive cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey, and more specifically in Somerset County, are very low right now, it will be important for our whole community to take personal responsibility to stop the spread of the virus in our schools. Please be assured, we will be implementing guidelines and consequences to reinforce appropriate behavior.

Additionally, my previous communication indicated that teachers will be teaching from their classrooms. Since all buildings have met the guidelines as outlined by [Hillsborough's The Road Back Plan](#) and twelve-month employees have been reporting to work since early July, all ten-month district employees are expected to report to their assigned school buildings. Staff who have childcare issues caused by recent school district closures in neighboring communities

may be permitted to work from home during this time. The majority of our staff are ten-month employees who have not been in the buildings since March 13. As such, it is important for staff to return to their buildings, reduce personal items that are taking up space that will be required when students return to the building, and assist in the preparation of our schools for the September 29 return of students. [Hillsborough's Road Back Plan](#) is focused on a safe school/work environment. Those arrangements are already in place, allowing all staff to enter and work in the buildings safely. In keeping with current guidance and a focus on personal responsibility, staff will be required to wear face coverings when entering the buildings. However, when teachers are alone in their classrooms, they will be able to remove face coverings to teach. When students re-enter the building for hybrid learning, everyone will be required to wear face coverings (except where medical limitations exist).

The administration and the Board of Education place a priority on the health and safety of our staff and students. While no plan will ever be perfect or will suit everyone's needs, we are doing our best to put a plan in place that ensures safety and effective learning opportunities. We have developed a set of [FAQs](#) that are being updated as new questions and issues arise. We ask that anyone with questions reviews the FAQs, however should questions remain, please reach out to your principal. Staff members with concerns ought to contact his/her/their immediate supervisor or the human resources director.

Thank you,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Lisa M. Antunes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 18, 2020 - Virtual Only Environment Through Friday, September 25

Good Evening HTPS Community,

I hope everyone is enjoying the last several long, lazy summer days.

As you may be aware, and as expected, we continue to receive guidance from the Governor, the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) and the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) that is altering the landscape of how we are able to start school this fall. Six (6) days ago, on August 12, Governor Murphy stated that if schools cannot legitimately meet some of the Coronavirus health and safety standards, districts must document these reasons and begin the academic year remotely. Since that time, neighboring school districts have requested (or will soon be requesting) to start the school year in a virtual only environment.

Unfortunately, as districts continue to alter their plans coupled with the review of staff health and safety concerns in our district, the District Restart Committee (DRC) has concluded that, at this time, we are unable to meet the health and safety standards to operate the hybrid plan to start the school year. As such, we are starting the school year in an all virtual environment through Friday, September 25. We will begin hybrid instruction on Tuesday, September 29.

Please note that low-incidence classes (i.e. Autism, LLD-Severe, Mild/Moderate, Behavior Disabilities) will attend in-person instruction beginning Tuesday, September 8, depending upon class size and instructional space. The Office of Special Services will provide additional information.

We understand that adjusting the timeline for implementation of the hybrid model will impact family schedules and parents' ability to work outside of the home (as well as inside of the home). We do not take this action lightly; these decisions were made after many hours of discussion and deliberation. Instead, we are hoping to ensure a safe and more seamless start to the school year for our students and our staff. We note that our three-week delay to our hybrid plan is much shorter than many other districts. However, we are confident that given this extra time, our district will be able to initiate the hybrid model on Tuesday, September 29.

During this three-week transition, teachers will be providing synchronous learning experiences, most from their classrooms, enabling us to be better prepared to accept students in-person as part of the hybrid plan on September 29. Please note that virtual learning will be provided according to the schedule outlined in Appendix N of the Roadback Restart and Recovery Plan with virtual learning for Amsterdam Elementary School and Triangle Elementary School students running from 7:50am - 11:50am, Hillsborough Elementary School, Sunnymead Elementary School, Woodfern Elementary School, and Woods Road Elementary School running from 8:30am - 12:30pm, Auten Road School running from 9:15am - 1:50pm, Hillsborough Middle School running from 8:30am - 1:00pm, and Hillsborough High School running from 7:30am - 12:00pm. Teachers will also be available in the afternoons for 1:1 instruction, collaboration, and student/parent conferences, as needed. Specific information will be provided by each principal in the near future.

Also, in order to provide more professional development for improved remote teaching, as well as teaching in a hybrid environment (with some students in the classroom and some students learning synchronously from a remote location), we will be making a slight revision to the calendar. While Board of Education approval of the plan is not required, the Board will take action on Monday evening (August 24) to revise the 2020-2021 school calendar as follows:

- We will move the staff inservice day scheduled for Monday, October 12, to Thursday, September 3. Monday, October 12, will now be a regular school day for all staff and students.

- We will initiate virtual learning with all students on Friday, September 4.
- We will provide synchronous virtual learning (with teachers in their classrooms) for all students beginning Tuesday, September 8 through Friday, September 25.
- Our low-incidence classes (i.e. Autism, LLD-Severe, Mild/Moderate, Behavior Disabilities) will attend in-person instruction beginning Tuesday, September 8, depending on class size and instructional space.
- Following our scheduled day off on Monday, September 28, the hybrid model will start on Tuesday, September 29, for those students who requested it. Those students who requested virtual learning will remain in their virtual environments.

Once again, the schedules outlined in the [Roadback Restart and Recovery Plan](#) will apply to all students (hybrid and virtual) starting on Tuesday, September 29. However, please look for more specific information from your building administrator regarding scheduling and teacher assignments.

Please know that there may be additional alterations to the school calendar as we move through the year to ensure the best learning for our students and training for our staff. We will do our best to keep you informed of any changes and/or adjustments.

As shared with many who have reached out, as you may imagine, this is an overwhelmingly complicated task that is sure to invite criticism from many since, no matter the options, there is not one plan that fits all. As we continue to monitor the guidance from the Governor's Office, the NJDOE, and the NJDOH, we are also working to address the various moving pieces to determine the best course of action for the Hillsborough school district.

The typical back-to-school excitement and promise ought to be embraced by all of us at this time as it remains important, perhaps more so now than ever before, that we come together as a community. There are no perfect or simple answers or solutions to the issues we continue to face as a country, state, and community. Therefore, as we adapt to the changes, it is essential that we also generate enthusiasm for what lies ahead. Tempering our anxieties, managing our uncertainties, treating each other with kindness and respect, and embracing our hopes will go a long way toward realizing that we all want what is best for our students and the HTPS community overall.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Superintendent of Schools

August 6, 2020 - Plans for Start of School Year

Dear HTPS Community,

I hope this communication finds you and your family healthy, well, and enjoying some summer fun!

The COVID-19 pandemic has been and continues to be an incredible challenge for our country, our state, and our community. School districts were placed in the untenable position of restructuring teaching and learning in an environment that no one has ever encountered. Your continued support, understanding, and patience coupled with the assistance and guidance of our school physician and local department of health to prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff have been greatly appreciated.

The District Restart Committee (DRC) continues to discuss the NJ Department of Education's (NJDOE) reopening guidance titled *The Road Back Restart and Recovery Plan for Education*, as well as additional and supplemental guidance that continues to be provided to school districts. Additionally, feedback provided via parent and staff surveys, emails, and phone calls have also been discussed. The work to safely reopen schools is still underway and will continue throughout August and into September. Directives and guidance from the Governor's Office and the NJDOE are updated on a regular basis and consistently change. As the directives and guidance are received, we, too will adjust our reopening plans accordingly.

No one really knows where we will be tomorrow, let alone on September 3. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) provide a continuum of interventions and strategies that, when consistently applied and adhered to, work to mitigate the overall risk of infection and spread, it is likely that as schools reopen across the country, an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases will be seen, as it is impossible to eliminate all risk of exposure. Nevertheless, organizations continue to acknowledge the critical roles and services provided by our schools.

It is important to acknowledge the uncertainty that comes with making the decision to return to school in an in-person capacity and we will be requesting that you do so very shortly. In order to make an informed decision, it is important to understand where we are with our plans. Please note that these plans are tentative and may be subject to change at any time based upon directives and guidance from the Governor's Office and the NJDOE.

At this time, HTPS students will be offered two (2) options; a fully virtual option or a hybrid option whereby students will report to school for in-class instruction two (2) days per week and participate virtually three (3) days per week. **Once you have had a chance to review the options, click on the FORMS tab from the Genesis Parent Portal to make your selection for September. Please make your choice by Monday, August 10.**

Those who choose the virtual option MUST commit for a minimum of one marking period at a time (Marking Period #1 9.03.2020 - 11.13.2020). All virtual option students will receive the same quality and scope of instruction as students choosing to participate in the hybrid model. Full-day structured, synchronous (real time, live teaching and learning) learning opportunities will be provided and video recordings will be available for those who need it. The provisions of special education and related services will be provided to the greatest extent possible.

Students electing the hybrid model will be alphabetically divided into two (2) cohorts (Red and Gold). Each cohort will attend school for in-person instruction two (2) days per week and receive instruction virtually three days (3) per week. Please note that family units will be assigned the same cohort (even if different last names exist within the family). Additionally, low incidence special education classes (Autism, LLD ~ Severe, Mild/Moderate, Behavior Disabilities) will attend in-person four (4) days per week depending upon class size and instructional space.

All students and staff members will be required to wear face coverings at all times. Should a medical condition exist that does not allow for a face covering to be worn, a physician’s note will be required. Moreover, in an effort to reduce capacity in hallways and common areas, new stairwell and hallway patterns will be established. Hand sanitizing stations will be readily available.

Sample schedules for each school follow and are also outlined in [Hillsborough’s Road Back Plan presentation](#). Please note that all schedules are subject to change. Building-based administrators will also provide further detail over the next several weeks. Additionally, the hybrid model may be revised depending upon the number of families who choose the virtual option.

Elementary Schools ~ Hybrid Model ~Grades 1-4

Day	Red Cohort	Gold Cohort
Monday and Tuesday	AM - In-person learning until dismissal PM - Virtual Specials	AM - Virtual learning using synchronous / asynchronous materials PM - Virtual Specials
Wednesday	-One synchronous class meeting for class community building -Virtual learning using asynchronous materials -Scheduled small group and 1:1 instructional times	-One synchronous class meeting for class community building -Virtual learning using asynchronous materials -Scheduled small group and 1:1 instructional times
Thursday and Friday	AM - Virtual learning using synchronous / asynchronous materials PM - Virtual Specials	AM - In-person learning until dismissal PM - Virtual Specials

Elementary Schools ~ Hybrid Model ~ Kindergarten

Morning and afternoon students will follow a Hybrid Model Schedule and attend one full four-hour day per week. The afternoon kindergarten sessions will be held during morning hours ~ PM hours will resume when we return to a regular schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A- Day	B -Day	All Students	A- Day	B-Day
Red Cohort		All Virtual	Gold Cohort	
<i>AM Kdg Students</i> Morning - In-person learning until dismissal Afternoon - Virtual Specials	<i>PM Kdg Students</i> Morning - In-person learning until dismissal Afternoon - Virtual Specials	-One synchronous class meeting for class community building -Virtual learning using asynchronous materials	<i>AM Kdg Students</i> Morning - In-person learning until dismissal Afternoon - Virtual Specials	<i>PM Kdg Students</i> Morning - In-person learning until dismissal Afternoon - Virtual Specials
Gold Cohort			Red Cohort	
Morning - Virtual learning using asynchronous materials Afternoon - Virtual Specials	Morning - Virtual learning using asynchronous materials Afternoon - Virtual Specials	-Scheduled small group and 1:1 instructional times	Morning - Virtual learning using asynchronous materials Afternoon - Virtual Specials	Morning - Virtual learning using asynchronous materials Afternoon - Virtual Specials

Elementary Schools ~ Hybrid Model ~ Pre-K ONLY

Class	Day	Timeframe
Pre-K ~ AM Classes	Monday and Tuesday	8:30 AM ~ 11:00 PM
Pre-K ~ PM Classes	Thursday and Friday	8:30 AM ~ 11:00 PM
Pre-K ~ Full Day Class (Autism)	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday	8:30 AM ~ 12:30 PM

More detailed information will be forthcoming.

Auten Road Intermediate School ~ Hybrid Model

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	A-Day	B-Day	All Students	A-Day	B-Day
Red Cohort	In-Person	In-Person	All Virtual	Virtual	Virtual
Gold Cohort	Virtual	Virtual	All Virtual	In-Person	In-Person

Sample Schedules~ Subject to Change

Schedule for: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday*
ALTERNATING (A/B) BLOCK

A-Day	B-Day	Time	Minutes
HR	HR	9:15 - 9:20	10
1	6	9:25 - 10:10	40
2	7	10:15 - 11:00	40
3	8	11:05 - 11:50	40
4	9	11:55 - 12:40	40
5	WIN	12:45 - 1:10	40
Bus Room	Bus Room	1:15 - 1:25	10

Schedule for Wednesday*

	Time	Minutes
Login	9:15 - 9:20	5
1	9:25 - 9:50	25
2	9:55 - 10:20	25
3	10:25 - 10:50	25
4	10:55 - 11:20	25
5	11:25 - 11:50	25
6	11:55 - 12:20	25
7	12:25 - 12:50	25
8	12:55 - 1:20	25
9	1:25 - 1:50	25

*Synchronous / asynchronous learning, teacher/student collaboration and student/parent conferencing will be conducted in the afternoon.

Hillsborough Middle School ~ Hybrid Model

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	A-Day	B-Day	All Students	A-Day	B-Day
Red Cohort	In Person	In Person	All Virtual	Virtual	Virtual
Gold Cohort	Virtual	Virtual	All Virtual	In Person	In Person

Sample Schedules~ Subject to Change

Schedule for: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday*

A/B-Day Bell Schedule

A-Day	B-Day	Time	Minutes
HR	HR	8:30 - 8:40	10
1	6	8:45 - 9:30	45
2	7	9:35 - 10:20	45
3	8	10:25 - 11:10	45
4	9	11:15 - Noon	45
5	5	12:05 - 12:30	25

Schedule for Wednesday*

	Time	Minutes
HR	8:30 - 8:35	5
1	8:35 - 9:00	25
2	9:05 - 9:30	25
3	9:35 - 10:00	25
4	10:05 - 10:30	25
5	10:35 - 11:00	25
6	11:05 - 11:30	25
7	11:35 - Noon	25
8	12:05 - 12:30	25
9	12:35 - 1:00	25

*Synchronous / asynchronous learning, teacher/student collaboration and student/parent conferencing will be conducted in the afternoon.

Hillsborough High School ~ Hybrid Model

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
A-Day	B-Day	All Students	A-Day	B-Day
Red - In-Person (A)	Red - In-Person (B)	All Virtual	Red - Virtual	Red - Virtual
Gold - Virtual	Gold - Virtual	All Virtual	Gold - In-Person (A)	Gold - In-Person (B)

Sample Schedule~ Subject to Change

A-Day	Min	B-Day	Min
Pd. 1 - 7:30 - 8:40	70	Pd. 4/5/6 (cont) - 7:30 - 8:06	36
Pd. 2 - 8:48 - 9:58	70	Pd. 6/7/8 - 8:14 - 9:24	70
Pd. 3 - 10:06 - 11:16	70	Pd. 9 - 9:32 - 10:42	70
Pd. 4/5/6 - 11:24 - 12:00	36	Pd. 10 - 10:50 - 12:00	70

As you might imagine, managing the safe reopening of schools remains at the forefront of our minds. Please be cognizant of your travel plans over the next several weeks, especially if travelling to an area that will require quarantine for 14 days upon your return. Should you

travel to a location that requires quarantine upon your return to NJ, your child(ren) will not be permitted to begin hybrid instruction.

I continue to read all information as it is released, as well as articles and emails from parents, staff, and students. There are no quick or easy pathways to overcoming the challenges we face as a community and a school district. Please know that as much as I would like to respond to each email personally, I am unable to do so at this time due to the overwhelming number currently being received; however, please also be assured that I am reading every single one and appreciate your feedback and acknowledge your concerns.

I will continue to keep you informed as the situation progresses and as we respond to information we receive from the Governor's Office, the NJDOE, and the DOH. As a reminder, once you have had a chance to review the options, click on the FORMS tab from the [Genesis Parent Portal](#) to make your selection for September. Please make your choice by Monday, August 10.

As stated previously, the uncertain times in which we find ourselves elicit a variety of emotions and frustrations. Everyone will not be pleased with the available options and / or the logistics of each. Every effort has been made to keep our students and staff safe while complying with NJ Department of Education mandates. Many questions remain as we move forward with preparations to resume instruction and as we receive answers, we will share them with the community, however, much of the situation is beyond our control at this time and your continued patience and understanding is appreciated.

Finally, please visit our presentation outlining [Hillsborough's Road Back Plan](#) and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that will be added to the [district website](#) over the next few days and updated regularly. Do not hesitate to reach out to your building principal with any additional logistical questions. Any modifications to the beginning of the year schedule will be communicated, if necessary.

Respectfully,

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes

Dr. Lisa M. Antunes
Superintendent of Schools