



March 16, 2021

Dear Ridgewood School Community,

The challenges of reopening schools and educating students across multiple platforms have been considerable, but our faculty, students, and parents have persevered and found creative solutions. Over the course of the school year, the District has made incremental modifications to the reopening plan to continue to enhance the educational experience of students while following current public health data and guidance from state and local health officials. As teachers and the community receive their vaccinations, and COVID positivity numbers decline overall, the future looks promising.

I am pleased to announce that the District will expand in-person learning to daily instruction of four (4) hours per day for all students. **Phase II of the Ridgewood Public Schools Reopening and Operations Plan will begin on April 19 (two weeks after Spring Recess).**

This expanded model of in-person instruction is subject to change based upon updated information and guidance from the governor's office, NJDOE, NJDOH, and local health officials. **Families will continue to have the option to remain fully remote through the end of the school year.** The current method of participation in virtual learning for the afternoons will remain in place for all students.

Phase II parameters:

1. This model of daily in-person instruction (4 hours per day) for all students will include less than six (6) feet of physical distancing in many classrooms and, as a result, may require more individuals to be quarantined, whole classrooms to be quarantined, and/or schools to be closed. Each positive COVID case will continue to be investigated on an individual basis following the [NJDOH COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria](#) until a determination regarding the quarantine results is made.
2. If Ridgewood or the Northeast Bergen COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI) is determined to have a "very high" (red) positivity rating, then the District WILL return to every-other-day in-person learning with A/B cohorts or all virtual instruction on the immediate Monday following that Friday's report.
3. If the Ridgewood Department of Health verifies a significant two (2) week consecutive increase in the percent positivity case rate for the Ridgewood Public Schools, then the District MAY return to every-other-day in-person learning with A/B cohorts on the immediate Monday following that Friday's report.

The following rules will be in place during Phase II:

1. Six (6) feet of physical distancing will be maintained, to the greatest extent possible, in the halls and classrooms.
2. In certain cases, six (6) feet of physical distancing will not be possible in this new model. This means that some students may have to sit less than six (6) feet apart.

3. Individual barriers will be placed on each student desk in the classrooms where six (6) feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained.
4. All students, faculty, and staff will continue to wear masks at all times and follow protocols for daily health screening and hand hygiene.

The Phase II model of a typical school schedule will be posted to the [Reopening Our Schools](#) page of our website shortly. The COVID dashboard, pandemic guidance, and resources for families and students can be found on this newly revamped section of the website.

Later this week, the District will be sending **two important communications to parents**:

1. A selection form that will determine your child's model of instruction for the remainder of the year. This selection form will lock in your child's model of instruction through June; transitions between models will no longer be in place.
2. A survey regarding your child's educational experience this year.

While the survey is optional, **it is imperative that parents complete the selection form** so that adequate preparations can be made for the transition to four (4) hours of daily in-person instruction on April 19.

The prospect of moving to Phase II is exciting. During the upcoming weeks, the community must continue to work together toward this common goal of reducing community transmission. Please be sure to follow the "3 Ws": watch your distance, wear a mask, and wash your hands. As per the NJDOH recommendations, non-essential travel outside the immediate area is still discouraged. We look forward to making this transition on April 19 and to giving our students an opportunity for increased in-person instruction at this point in the school year.

Respectfully,



Thomas A. Gorman, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools