



Kimberly J. Schneider, Ed. D.
Superintendent

August 10, 2020

Dear MCSSSD family:

It is out of an abundance of caution that I present an “all remote” instructional model for the September reopening of Mercer County Special Services School District, as requested to be submitted to our county office thirty (30) days prior to the reopening of our schools. The Principal of each school has prepared a letter which is posted on our website containing further detail for your review.

To begin, building and district level teams met to plan for our September reopening. The health and specific needs of our student population were reviewed in the context of the NJDOE Critical Areas of Operation Standards. It is through this lens that the health and safety of our school family became the primary overriding factor of this decision, as our District continues to effectively deliver remote instruction to 414 students currently.

Having spent months researching and preparing a hybrid model that would offer two on-site half days of instruction and three remote days of instruction per child, we learned the positivity rate in Mercer county, specifically Trenton, was rising. Many of our District’s staff and students live in Trenton increasing the opportunity of regional spreading of the virus, and we would be unable to provide substitutes for specifically certified staff in the areas of special education and nursing. Our ability to quarantine would be problematic in that staff would not be available to cover as subs or nurses should outbreaks were to occur.

While we have been successful in ordering specialty equipment to provide all staff with their unique PPE of masks, shields, gowns and supplies, deep exhalations in the classrooms associated with singing, playing, or direct close instruction, would be a risk to all. We know our differently abled students have difficulty maintaining social distance, wearing masks, or managing behaviors without close personal instructional support for prolong periods of time.

We will review data weekly with local health officials with the intended start date of Monday, November 2, 2020.

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we persevere through this challenging time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kimberly J. Schneider".

Kimberly J. Schneider, Ed.D.
Superintendent