



Dr. Ronald G. Taylor
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October 16, 2020

Dear SOMSD Community:

I hope this correspondence finds you well. Allow me to start by thanking every member of our District Family and acknowledging the efforts put forward to move us successfully through the first 6 weeks or so of our school year. Our start has not been perfect but it has been unequivocally a success.

As we announced this summer in concert with Governor Murphy's Executive Order 175, our current plan remains in place to offer in-person educational opportunities beginning on November 12th. The health and safety of our students and staff is our #1 priority; to that end, we have invested significantly in preparing our buildings for our reopening.

To gauge where our District families currently stand, we are sending a *revised* version of the "Return to School Preference Form" sent in August 2020. We understand that some families may still be apprehensive about sending their children back to school during this pandemic. Knowing this, the District would like to provide parents/guardians with flexibility, but also needs to plan in advance for scheduling purposes and ensure we are abiding by social distancing requirements. Please note, for this round, PreK – 8 and CHS will have two separate preference forms - **final responses will be due by Wednesday, October 28th @ 6 pm.**

- **PreK - 8 “Return to School Preference” Form:** <https://bit.ly/3lRg2dU> (the form link will also be sent to families via email/SMS on Monday, October 19).
- **CHS “Return to School Preference” Form:** An email will be sent to CHS families/students on Monday, October 19th with the link to the preference form as well as additional sign-in information for the CHS Town Hall event.

To help families make a more informed decision on whether your child will attend school in-person (hybrid instruction) or continue with all-virtual instruction we are inviting the community to join us for a few upcoming virtual events. We encourage families to attend these events. If you are unable to attend, all presentations will be sent to families via email and WebEx recordings will be posted to the District website.

Date	Event	Link
Mon., October 19 @ 7:30pm	Virtual Board of Education Meeting: Superintendent Taylor will share a robust comprehensive presentation regarding the details of the District’s re-entry plan.	Join By Computer / Smartphone www.somsd.k12.nj.us/webmeeting Meeting ID: 173 376 2021 Meeting PW: RTS2021 Join By Phone Telephone Number: 408-418-9388 Meeting ID: 173 376 2021 Meeting PW: 7872021 from phones
Mon., October 26 @ 7:30pm	PreK-8 Virtual Return to School Academic Update Town Hall	WebEx Link: https://bit.ly/2FAi7eR
Tues., October 27 @ 7:30pm	CHS Virtual Return to School Academic Update Town Hall	WebEx Link: https://bit.ly/3lTLMir (additional event information will be sent via email)

Yesterday, as a courtesy to our teachers and staff, we shared an internal letter regarding their return to building dates. As of **Monday, October 18th, all District buildings will be open and available for staff to return on a voluntary basis, in order to visit and set-up their classrooms and to give them a few weeks/days to test out teaching virtually from their classrooms before students return.** All remaining teaching staff will return to their school buildings by November 9th, in preparation for the start of hybrid instruction on Thursday, November 12th.

New Jersey COVID-19 Travel Advisory

Also, of utmost importance, please see below for important information regarding COVID-19 related travel to high incidence areas within the last 14 days. Under the 14-day quarantine travel advisory announced by the Governors of New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut, individuals traveling to or returning to New Jersey from states with increasing rates of COVID-19 are advised to self-quarantine for 14 days. This includes travel by train, bus, car, plane, and any other method of transportation. If your family plans to travel to any of these locations prior to the start of hybrid instruction, they will need to quarantine (continue to learn via virtual-instruction) until after the quarantine period is over.

- **States:** <https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/which-states-are-on-the-travel-advisory-list-are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>
- **Countries:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>

As we move forward in preparation for in-person learning, we continue to remind our community/families that this situation is fluid. While we believe it is important to begin to have our students return to modified in-person learning, we are also being very cautious in our planning and continue to be led by insight from our local health departments, as well as state and federal guidelines. We look forward to sharing our plan with the community in the next couple of weeks.

Have a safe and enjoyable weekend.

Educationally yours



Dr. Ronald G. Taylor