



Principals' Message

1 message

Ramapo Indian Hills High School <noreply@rih.org>
Reply-To: Ramapo Indian Hills High School <noreply@rih.org>

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Ramapo Indian Hills Regional H.S. District

Principals' Message

29 August 2020

Good Morning Ramapo and Indian Hills Communities!

We hope this email finds all of you doing well and that you were able to enjoy your summer even if it was a bit more muted than in previous years.

Thursday night the Interim Superintendent, Bruce Watson, made a recommendation to the Board of Education to begin the school year remotely for the first thirteen days of class. The board voted and approved the recommendation. Mr. Watson sent communication out yesterday further explaining the change of plan.

We know many of you have a wide range of thoughts and opinions about this, and whether you are relieved, disappointed, or indifferent, we wanted you to understand why the building administration supports the recommendation.

The District began to discuss and develop our return to learning plan on July 3rd. At that time of New Jersey was in Phase 2 of their [Reopening Plan](#), the three key health metrics were as follows:

Infection Rate (rate of transmission) - .98

Daily New Cases per 1000 people - 3.5

Positivity Rate (% of those testing positive) - 1.6

Our plan was aggressive and assumed that New Jersey would continue to experience improved health metrics and advance through Stage 2 and potentially into Stage 3 by September 8th. Also at that time Governor Murphy was reopening day care centers, summer camps, and increasing outdoor

gathering of up to 500 people. It's important to note that the State was also on the cusp of allowing in-door dining at 25% capacity; however, a short time later the Governor paused any further advancement in Stage 2 due to the fact that our three key health metrics remained relatively the same or increased slightly.

According to the [COVID-19 Dashboard](#), not only does Bergen County lead the state in the total number of confirmed cases, the State's infection rate (rate of transmission) as of yesterday, August 28, 2020, had ticked down to .77, but just last Thursday the rate was at 1.06. The three key data points as of August 27 were as follows:

Infection Rate (rate of transmission) - .87

Daily New Cases per 1000 people - 3.1

Positivity Rate (% of those testing positive) - 1.2

As you can see, the health metrics have remained fairly consistent throughout the summer and do not reflect a significant advancement in Stage 2. This definitely doesn't reflect what we had hoped for when we started developing the return to learning plan in early July.

So as we looked at the data, and reviewed our original Return to Learning Plan that was based on optimistic data predictions, we recognized that we needed to make some adjustments to our Return to Learning Plan. Simply put, the current health metrics do not support a full day of instruction and in-door, in-person lunches.

We will have to adjust the schedule, and this will take some time to ensure we provide the most balanced schedule for the hybrid learning environment when you do return to the building on September 24th. We have some facility work that needs to be completed based on recent recommendations for furniture capacity in the rooms in addition to displaying the signage (arriving soon) so that we can post for proper traffic flow, among other things.

When we return to in-person learning, we will not be able to serve lunch on campus for the first stage of our Return to Learning Plan, but grab-and-go lunches will be available for purchase. We will have smaller cohorts of students that afford greater balance in the classrooms and lessen the overall capacity in the building and hallways.

As Mr. Watson's communication stated yesterday, we will be sending more specific information out in the near future about the Remote Learning Schedule that will run from 9/8-9/23 in addition to the In-Person Schedule for our return on 9/24. The length of the first phase of our return to in-person instruction will be based on a variety of metrics, but we will transition two (two-cohorts) when the information supports it is safe to do so. We can assure you that we want to get everyone back in the building for full day instruction as soon as we can responsibly do so. As we continue to push forward to in-person learning, we ask for your patience, grace, cooperation, and ingenuity.

We miss you, and we look forward to welcoming you on campus on September 24th. We wish you all a wonderful close to the summer, and best of luck this school year.

With warmest regards,

Greg Vacca, Principal

Indian Hills High School

Travis Smith, Principal

Ramapo High School

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Ramapo Indian Hills H.S District

*131 Yawpo Ave
Oakland, NJ 07436*

201-416-8100