



Ms. Eileen F. Shafer
Superintendent of Schools

December 10, 2020

Dear Parents,

Last night, upon my recommendation, the Board of Education authorized me to extend remote learning until March 1, 2021. We will assess local pandemic conditions by February 15, 2021 to determine whether it is safe to reopen the District's school buildings. I wanted to share with you the reasons behind the decision to extend remote learning.

As I have said before about the decision to reopen school buildings, data will be our guide and safety will be our priority. Nearly ten months after COVID-19 first emerged in New Jersey, community spread of new infections has reached an all-time high.

On December 4th, New Jersey officials reported 5,673 new infections statewide in just one day, including 458 new cases in Passaic County and 323 in Paterson. This twofold increase in new cases over the past month marks a new peak in virus activity. Additionally, there have been 70 school-linked outbreaks of COVID-19 since September, resulting in 285 new cases and prompting hundreds of school districts to implement all-remote instruction.

Nearly 30 districts, including Paterson, have already decided to remain all-remote until after the new year. School-linked outbreaks in Passaic County have occurred in Clifton, Wayne, Little Falls, Haledon, and Pompton Lakes. State officials expect even more positive cases in the coming weeks.

If and when our school buildings reopen for students, it will be according to the restart plan. You'll recall that it was a hybrid plan with students coming to school for two days a week for in-person instruction and engaging in remote learning for the remaining three days a week.

I realize that this decision may not be welcome news to many of you. Please know that we are dedicated to doing everything we can to help make this time as easy as possible. Our Information Call Center is still ready to take your questions. For calls in English, call (973) 321-0609. For calls in Arabic, call (973) 321-0610. For calls in Spanish, call (973) 321-0611. For calls Bengali, call (973) 321-0612. Once you leave your question, a District staff member will respond to you within 24 hours.

If you or your child need assistance using a Chromebook or Google Classroom, call our PPS Google Helpdesk. For calls in English, call 973-321-0914. For calls in Spanish, call 973-321-2484.

Also, the District's website, Facebook page, Instagram page and Twitter account are updated almost every day. Please check them often for information about online events, workshops, and resources to help parents, students and families during the pandemic.

I know you understand that we must continue to keep the safety of our students – your children – and our staff as our top priority. Please know that we are working hard to make students' virtual learning experiences as engaging and as effective as possible.

I thank you for your understanding and willingness to work with us during this challenging time. Please continue to wear a mask whenever you go out, maintain social distancing wherever you go, avoid large crowds/gatherings and wash your hands often.

Be well, stay safe, and thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eileen J. Shafer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Eileen Shafer

Superintendent of Schools