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Dear Parents,

On August 12, 2020, the Governor announced that schools are permitted to start school in a remote learning only platform if the school is not able to safely open and meet the evolving requirements rooted in health and safeness. Please know, based on the Governor's latest guidance, the Fairfield Township Board of Education approved our school to start the year with 100% remote learning only at the virtual board meeting held on August 13, 2020 @ 7:00pm. This timing is imperative to inform our families, faculty, and staff in order to plan accordingly for September.

As you may recall, we presented our plan for all possible scenarios. In particular, we focused on hybrid instruction as the Governor dictated that every school district, ***"will open in-person instruction and operations in some capacity."*** That was the Governor's directive at the end of June 2020. Then, in the middle of July 2020, the Governor issued new guidance on parental choice allowing students to go fully remote learning. On August 12, 2020, the governor just announced that districts are permitted to open, unless they need additional time to implement safe and healthy protocols and procedures.

Due to COVID-19 items of justifiable health and safety concern, we will start the year in a 100% remote learning only platform. At the moment, we are not able to meet the revised New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) checklist requirements for reopening schools. Further, according to the new results from the staff survey, there is now over 50% of teachers who intend not to work onsite. Specifically, not having enough staff in the building due to reasons related to COVID-19 is another significant factor. As a result, we wanted to get this decision alert and rationale to parents sooner rather than later in order for parents to plan and prepare as appropriate.

The Board of Education and reopening school committee carefully reviewed and decided that it's too challenging to satisfy all the health and safety conditions of the reopening school plan as outlined in the PowerPoint presentation found on the school website. The deficits were a growing and valid concern prior to the Governor's recent announcement. Although a thoughtful and strategic plan was created, the execution would have been a real logistical challenge. Moreover, the Cumberland County Superintendent granted endorsement of support.

Therefore, rather than risk the safety and welfare of the students, staff, and community members, the practical decision to begin the year with remote learning only is the right choice. Indeed, we will continue to monitor each month and formally evaluate in December 2020. **The optimistic game-plan is that students will either attend onsite and/or a hybrid learning platform in January 2021 if deemed healthy and safe.** We will keep everyone updated on the progress.

Of course, we remain thankful the reopening school plan received widespread support. We continue to be grateful the reopening school plan was accepted by the community and approved by the board of education, reopening school committee, and NJDOE. However, the reality is that opening school with students being onsite in any capacity turned out to be an impossible task. Please know more detailed information and specific instructions will be forthcoming next week.

Given the above, I hope this information is helpful. Please reach out should you have any questions. Meanwhile, we look forward to your support and cooperation during this unprecedented COVID-19.

Respectfully Yours,



Dr. Michael Knox