

WEST DEPTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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To the West Deptford Community:

Yesterday was a difficult day in our Country, as we set a new record for COVID deaths nationwide, we saw our Capitol in chaos, and our Democratic process threatened. Below are some resources we have identified to help speak with children about these issues:

- [Talking to Kids About the Attack on the Capitol](#). (NEA)
- [Talking to Children about Violence - Tips for Parents and Teachers](#) (From National Associations of School Psychologists)
- <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/teaching-in-the-wake-of-a-traumatic-news-event-like-the-storming-of-the-u-s-capitol/2021/01>
- https://laist.com/2021/01/06/how_to_process_a_scary_day_for_the_nation_with_your_kids.php

The most important message of this update: Our district's full remote status is scheduled to conclude with a return to hybrid in-person learning anticipated to resume on January 19, 2021. Currently, we are working through the data to determine if our hybrid model will remain the same or if there are changes that will need to be made. At this time we are still planning on early dismissals because of lunch, bussing, and demands on our staff. It is our sincere desire to return to regular in-person learning five days a week as soon as we possibly can, although unfortunately we don't know yet when that will be.

We have been piecing together a report on the numbers of confirmed positive COVID cases and quarantines in our District (staff and students) since September. Unfortunately, the numbers continue to grow. We are hoping that as we move further and further from the holidays, the numbers will start to come down. We have continued to see the ripple effect of these quarantines affect our remote learning, and this is a contributing factor to our ability to reopen on January 19. I want to be clear that our goal *is* to open; however, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to, as we are limited by the required quarantines occurring based on positive COVID tests. Again, let me reiterate - we will do everything to ensure the opening of our schools. We understand the hardships remote learning causes families and we appreciate the efforts of our community during remote learning.

Some steps that we all can do to help ensure that the school day returns to normal as soon as possible are the following:

- Continuing with protocols for social distancing, limiting close contact, wearing masks, washing hands, and monitoring/reporting symptoms. Continuing to adhere to these protocols for students, staff, families, and communities has a direct impact on our school district's ability to return to our regular school day.
- Avoiding non-essential travel. State travel restrictions increased over Winter Break: "New Jersey strongly discourages all non-essential interstate travel at this time...The advisory is no longer specific to certain states. Because of the rising number of case-counts across all states, there is an increased risk of spread of COVID-19 upon return from any travel."
- Pre-registering, registering, and getting a COVID vaccination via NJ's COVID vaccine scheduling system <https://covidvaccine.nj.gov/>
- Joining COVID Alert NJ to reduce the spread of COVID-19 via <https://covid19.nj.gov/app>. The app is free and has important information.

A continued positive note has been that our teachers and staff have continued to persevere with our students, in spite of great obstacles. Together with our students, we are proud that the learning has been as consistent as possible. We know it is not the best situation; nothing is better than our in-person instruction. We are fortunate to have staff and students who are so resilient, and we know that as we continue to work together we will continue to thrive and succeed.

Thank you,
Greg Cappello

PRIDE, PASSION, AND A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE