

Berkeley Heights Public Schools
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Dr. Melissa Varley
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Include, Inspire, Empower



Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you well. As many of you know, surveys were distributed last week to staff and students regarding our next steps with regard to school schedules. The administrative team has reviewed the results and I am announcing the following changes that will be effective on Monday, November 9th. We firmly believe these changes continue to balance the safety and security of our students and staff, while at the same time ensuring we provide the best educational outcomes for our students.

At the elementary level, our 1st-5th grade educators preferred (85% in favor) to move to Plan A - all students in-person for half a day with no lunch. The classrooms will be configured so that there is adequate social distancing between students, but we realize that six feet will not always be possible. In order to accommodate this, and meet state safety guidelines, each student will be provided with a protective barrier for their desk. The barriers are portable and students will be encouraged to decorate them to personalize their work space!

The move to Plan A for elementary school students (all students attending for half a day with no lunch) applies only for grades 1-5. Full Day Kindergarten students (where all students already attend in-person every day) will remain on its current schedule. We will be sending out more information about Pre-K and half-day Kindergarten next week. This schedule will increase the amount of direct instruction that will be provided for the in-person students, while at the same time allowing teachers to work with, and more frequently support, each of the remote students.

At Governor Livingston and Columbia, due to larger class sizes and some smaller classroom spaces, we will remain with the cohort hybrid model - 50% of students in school on an alternating week schedule. Student support for extending the morning instructional time from four to five hours was slightly less than 50%, while teachers overwhelmingly supported (86% in favor) an increase in the morning instructional time. The majority of teachers (89% in favor) and students (81% in favor) preferred to return to the six period rotate and drop schedule. The only

way to accommodate the change to our six period day is to extend the in-person morning instructional time. Accordingly, the GLHS and CMS schedules will be our normal six period rotate and drop schedule with 50% of the students in school at a time and no lunch.

Starting on November 9th the schedules are as follows:

Columbia: 8:15am - 1:00pm

Governor Livingston: 7:50am - 12:30pm

Like they are today, the afternoon instruction will be via required virtual live sessions that will include labs, extra-help, and support sessions. You can expect your children to attend a lab or a virtual class session in the afternoon.

Given these changes at each of our schools parents will still have the option to move their child to full remote learning. Please fill out this [form](#) if your child is an in-person student and you would like to move them to the remote only option. Please remember that if you choose to move to remote learning you must stay in remote until the next quarter or trimester break. This form is due by 10/28.

Thank you for your continued partnership as our entire school community works through this together.

Sincerely,

Melissa Varley