



Pablo Muñoz
Superintendent of Schools

August 12, 2020

Dear Parents, Students, and Staff:

I am writing to provide you with important information regarding the start of the 2020-2021 school year in September. As you read the information that follows, please note that the health and safety of our students and staff governed the development and the Passaic Board of Education approval of the *Schools Restart and Recovery Plan*.

First Day of School for Students: September 10, 2020

The first day of school for students is Thursday, September 10, 2020. All students and staff will begin the 2020-2021 school year in Phase 1, Full-Time Remote Home-Based Instruction. Phase 1 will be in effect from September 10, 2020 through October 31, 2020. During September and October, the Passaic Board of Education will monitor the health and safety conditions, statutes, and executive orders, and decide by October 31, 2020 whether to remain in Phase 1 or to move into Phase 2 on November 1, 2020. The Passaic Four (4) Phases are described in the following section.

Schools Restart and Recovery Plan

On Wednesday, August 12, 2020, the Passaic Board of Education approved its *Schools Restart and Recovery Plan*, consisting of four (4) phases designed to transition all students and staff back to school as health and safety conditions permit. This plan was developed with input from a 60 staff member Restart Committee, two Parent Focus Groups, the leadership of the five collective bargaining groups, and the survey results of over 6000 homes and 1600 employees; and with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). I thank the staff, parents, community members, the Passaic Board of Education, and elected officials for their contributions to our plan.

Passaic Four (4) Phases

The Passaic Board of Education will determine when each phase starts based upon the health and safety of its students and staff; and in compliance with statutes and executive orders.

Phase 1 – Full-Time Remote Home-Based Instruction

School buildings remain closed while all students and staff work remotely from home.

Phase 2 - Hybrid Instruction (One Session Day)

Hybrid instruction is defined as a combination of in-person school-based and remote home-based instruction. Parents will choose between hybrid instruction or full-time remote home-based instruction. Students will be assigned to one of four groups. Hybrid Instruction Groups A, B, and C will each attend school on a rotating basis, on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, with the remaining school days occurring remotely. Staff will work a full day, while students attend in-person instruction for one session. Students receive grab and go lunch. Staff will check in with remote students and complete other professional responsibilities. Group D will be full-time remote home-based instruction.

Phase 3 - Hybrid Instruction (Full Day)

This phase is identical to Phase 2 above, with the exception that hybrid instruction students will attend school for a full day.

Phase 4 - Full-Time In-person School-Based Instruction

School buildings open for all students and staff to resume regular schedule in-person school-based instruction.

Classroom Assignment, Student Schedules, and Instructional Materials

All students will receive a letter from their principal by September 1, 2020, with information regarding the distribution of instructional materials and how to access Google Classroom so that students can attend class on the first day of school. Students in Pre-kindergarten through grade 8 will receive their homeroom teacher's name and information about their homeroom Google Classroom Code. Students at Passaic High School, Passaic Preparatory Academy, and Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering will receive a link to Google Classroom Codes for all teachers. In addition, principals will communicate with staff regarding their assignments and Google Classroom.

2020-2021 School Calendar

Please review the 2020-2021 school year calendar at:

<https://files.passaicschools.org/districtcalendar/DistrictCalendar.pdf>

Parent Assistance

Parents that need assistance or have school-related questions should contact the school principal or parent liaison; or fill out the Parent Assistance Request Form (click on the red button - Parent Help) at: www.passaicschools.org

Access to Technology

Students that need a Chromebook or assistance with internet access should fill out the Parent Assistance Request Form (click on the red button - Parent Help) at: www.passaicschools.org

Student Registration

Procedures for school registration, transfers, and change of home address can be found at: <http://passaicschools.org/onlineregistration/>

Food Distribution

Food distribution will continue at seven Food Resource Centers. Food Resource Centers will be open on Mondays and Thursdays, from 8:00 am through 12:00 pm. All Passaic Public Schools students are permitted to receive five days of breakfast and lunch meals. The Food Resource Centers are located at Schools 3, 6, 8, 10, 19, 21, and Passaic High School.

PowerSchool Parent Portal

All parents are encouraged to establish a PowerSchool Parent Portal account at: <http://passaicschools.org/parents/parentportalhelp/>

PowerSchool Parent Portal allows you to view your child's grades, attendance, and complete important forms online. If you have not already set up a PowerSchool Parent Portal account, please contact your school principal or parent liaison for assistance.

Special Education Related and Out-of-District Services

All students receiving special education related and out-of-district services will be contacted by a staff member to review the delivery of services, and if applicable, transportation details.

Athletics

As of this writing, our high school athletic teams are participating in modified practices as per the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA). Team coaches will communicate a practice and competition schedule to student-athletes. All practices, bus transportation, and competitions will be governed by New Jersey Department of Education and the NJSIAA safety protocols. For additional athletic information, please contact the Director of Athletics at (973) 470-5228 or kkenny@passaicschools.org.

Visitor Procedures for Contagion Prevention

In order to prevent the spread of disease during pandemic recovery and to protect the health and safety of students and staff against infection, no visitors shall be permitted in the schools until pandemic restrictions are lifted. The principal may admit a visitor if he/she determines that it is necessary. In all such cases the visitor shall submit to the screening procedure (e.g., temperature and exposure questionnaire) and shall be required to wear a face mask while in the school building. The face mask shall be required in all cases. However, an accommodation may be made where the visitor can demonstrate that wearing a face mask is detrimental to the visitor's health. A child under two years of age shall not be required to wear a face mask.

United States Census 2020

The Census count is mandated by the Constitution of the United States and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, a nonpartisan government agency. The 2020 Census counts the population in the United States and five U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts. The 2020 Census will mark the 24th time that the country has counted its population since 1790. A complete and accurate count is critical for you and our community, because the results of the 2020 Census will affect community funding, congressional representation, and more. Please call and complete the Census at 844-330-2020 (English), 844-468-2020 (Español), or, on a phone, tablet, or computer, <https://my2020census.gov/>

I wish to acknowledge and thank our entire school community for their incredible efforts, concern for one another, and belief in each other during this difficult time. As students, parents, extended families, and school staff, you exemplify what is great about our Passaic community. As we begin this school year, we will need to assist and care for one another more than ever. We all learn best when we are safe and comfortable. COVID-19 challenges the very environment under which we want to teach and learn. I ask that we continue to assist one another until it is safe for all to return to a traditional school setting.

I wish you a safe and healthy 2020-2021 school year.

Sincerely,

Pablo Muñoz

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