



SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board of Education -14 Beekman Terrace- Summit - New Jersey 07901-1702 (908) 273-3023

Mr. Scott Hough, Superintendent of Schools

September 24, 2021

Dear Summit Public Schools Community,

I hope you and your families are all having a smooth transition back to school. It is hard to believe we are already approaching the end of September! Before I get into some announcements, I would like to take a moment to reflect on our journey over the past year.

Around this time last year, there were so many unknowns. We could barely have spectators at sporting events, our arts department was in the midst of creating an outdoor venue to accommodate social distancing and capacity limitations, and our students and teachers were quickly adjusting to a new hybrid learning model. This year, while we are still in a pandemic, things feel different. Not only do we have a full day of in-person instruction with lunch and recess, but we also have energetic crowds cheering for our student-athletes at sporting events, and we are reintroducing field trips across the district and PTO events at elementary schools. We have experienced tremendous growth from last year, and we continue to aim for as much normal as possible. Our sense of Hilltopper pride is alive and well. We could not have done this without all of your spirit and support!

Now, for the announcements:

Back to School Night

As some of you may have heard, I announced at the September Board of Education meeting that this year's Back to School Night will be held virtually. I understand some of you may be disappointed, but I can assure you this decision was not taken lightly. We strive to provide as much normalcy as possible for our students. To that point, we thought about hundreds of parents/guardians inside of our buildings and interacting with each other and staff, and believe it could potentially compromise that normalcy if any of our staff members became exposed. It is important for our students to see consistency with instruction, so we felt it would be best to hold Back to School Night virtually. It also helped that our schools received tremendous positive feedback after last year's virtual event, since it allowed parents/guardians to watch teachers' videos at their own convenience. Our building principals will continue to work with their PTO groups and look for additional opportunities for parents/guardians to connect with their children's teachers in a safe manner.

Drop-off and Pick-up

It is understandable in the beginning of every school year for drop-off and pick-up procedures to be a bit disjointed, because some families are learning them for the first time. However, we are receiving feedback from families and principals that some drivers are not following procedures



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and, in some cases, are driving dangerously. The health and safety of our students is our top priority. Our principals have the discretion to contact the Summit Police Department if they need extra support in the morning and afternoon. Please be mindful that all Summit schools are in residential areas. Please respect the rules of the road and respect other drivers. Here are important pedestrian safety tips from Summit police that we encourage you to communicate with your children:

- Look all ways before crossing the street
- Cross only at corners and crosswalks
- Obey police officers, school crossing guards and traffic signals
- Watch for turning cars
- Be especially alert in bad weather
- Do not run or play near traffic and roadways
- Walk in groups to and from school
- If you see something, say something to an adult

COVID Testing for Staff

At the end of August, Governor Phil Murphy signed Executive Order No. 253, requiring all preschool to Grade 12 school personnel to be fully vaccinated against COVID by October 18, 2021 or be subject to COVID testing at minimum one to two times per week. We are pleased to report that over 90% of our Summit Public Schools staff is fully vaccinated. To remain compliant with the Executive Order, we have partnered with Atlantic Health to facilitate weekly COVID testing opportunities for our unvaccinated staff members. I would like to extend my gratitude to Atlantic Health and Overlook Hospital for their continued support. Thanks to Doreen Babis, our Director of Special Services, we also secured an additional resource for staff with Advance Management Services, who will be available to provide weekly COVID testing at Summit High School. Staff members will also have the option to get tested on their own.

COVID Testing for the Summit Community

In our efforts to secure weekly COVID testing for staff, we have also secured a weekly opportunity for Summit community members to get tested. The testing will be conducted by Advance Management Services at Summit High School every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. beginning on October 2, 2021. Testing will be available to anyone in the Summit community. The company asks that you pre-register using this link: [Pre-Registration Link-Community Testing](#)

At-Home COVID Tests

A variety of home-based COVID tests are becoming more widely available. Parents/guardians, please be aware that any positive home-based COVID test must be reported immediately to the school nurse and principal, the student should isolate, and a follow up PCR test is necessary



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within 24 hours. If a home-based test is positive, but a PCR test taken within 24 hours of the home-based test comes back negative, the student may return to school, along with any close contacts who were also under quarantine. Here are some additional clarifications as per the New Jersey Department of Health:

In K-12 schools, home-based tests:

- **May be** used for screening testing of asymptomatic staff/students with no known exposure
- **May be** used to implement public health actions if positive tests are reported, including isolation recommendations and contact tracing
- **May be** used to shorten quarantine from 10 to 7 days after travel
- **Should not** be used to determine whether symptomatic individuals may return to school (unless performed with direct healthcare oversight or performed in a testing laboratory)
- **Should not** be used to shorten quarantine from 10 to 7 days after exposure to a COVID-19 case (when risk matrix is green/low or yellow/moderate) unless performed with direct healthcare oversight or performed in a testing laboratory

Thank you for contributing to a wonderful start to the school year! Enjoy a safe and relaxing weekend.

Be well,

Scott D. Hough
Superintendent of Schools