



## Superintendent's Report August 29, 2022

I am so excited for the start of the 2022-2023 school year! Teachers and staff will return on Thursday, September 1, 2022, and we will welcome students back to school on Tuesday, September 6, 2022! Our administrators, secretaries and custodians have everything just about ready for school to open and we are looking forward to a great year of learning and growth! Last week we welcomed twenty new employees at our district orientation – they are a great group and I know that they are excited to meet our students.

As we prepare to open school, our *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service* is posted on [the district website](#). However, the CDC recently issued updated guidance for schools – no requirement for social distancing and for those exposed to someone with COVID-19 there is no requirement for quarantine but those exposed are recommended to wear a well-fitting mask for ten calendar days to mitigate spread of the virus. Masking is optional for all other circumstances. I have updated the *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service* with the recommended guidelines, but the Board will discuss tonight and determine how the district will move forward. As I reported earlier this month, if parents have any questions or concerns about COVID-19 prior to school starting, they should contact their child's principal. Once school starts, COVID-19 questions can be directed to the school nurse.

I will be sending a letter to all families before school begins to alert everyone to some state-mandated updates to the Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) law. In December 2020, the New Jersey state legislature passed legislation modifying the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act. The updated law went into effect on July 9, 2022. On tonight's agenda, the Board will be voting on the first reading to update our Anti-Bullying policy and codifying the updates to the HIB law. The new law:

- requires the school district to provide parents with [a reporting form](#) posted on our district website. The form is already posted on the Anti-Bullying page of our district website, found under *Helpful Links*. Parents may print the form, complete it, and deliver it (or mail) to the main office in a sealed envelope addressed to the principal. As always, parents may also call the principal or anti-bullying specialist to report any concerning incidents – code of conduct violations or HIB incidents.
- allows the principal, in consultation with the Anti-Bullying Specialist, to make a preliminary decision as to whether the reported incident meet the definition of HIB under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights. If it does, the incident will be investigated by the Anti-Bullying Specialist. If it does not, the matter will be handled following the school's code of conduct process.
- requires that for the first and second acts of confirmed HIB, a copy of the investigation results to be placed in the student's record, and the student may have remedial consequences.
- requires that for the third and each subsequent act of confirmed HIB, a copy of the investigation results must be placed in the student's record, and the principal, in

consultation with appropriate school staff, must develop an individual student intervention plan, which must be approved by the superintendent. The plan will include remedial actions and may require the student, accompanied by a parent or guardian, to complete a class or training program to reduce harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

At our Back-to-School Nights, Principals and the Anti-Bullying Specialists will provide more information about HIB and what we are doing to prevent HIB in our schools. I thank everyone for partnering with us to help students prevent HIB incidents in our schools. Parents can visit the [Anti-Bullying page](#) on our district's website for more information about the definition of bullying, how to report it, and the HIB investigation process. Be on the look-out for my letter about the new HIB requirements.

You may have read in the news that all schools must create a Behavioral Threat Assessment team to be ready to start for the 2023-2024 school year. On August 18, 2022, Ms. Eichenlaub, Ms. Zanin, and I attended the School Behavioral Assessment & Management Training provided by the New Jersey Department of Education to begin our year-long timeline of preparing to have a team in place for September 2023. The session was informative and provided the framework for creating and implementing a team that will assess behavioral threats to the school. We will be starting this work soon!

Lastly, our board will be voting tonight to adopt new curriculum updates for the 2022-2023 school year. Once approved, I will post updated grade-level documents listing all of the learning objectives on the [Curriculum page](#) on our district website. In September, we will also host an information session for parents about the new comprehensive health standards with information about how parents may have their children opt-out of specific lessons.

Enjoy the last days of summer!

*Vincent Mc Hale*