August 28, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Recently a letter was sent home to you discussing our plan to instruct your children utilizing a blend of remote and in-person instruction. Since then, Gov. Murphy issued an executive order followed by additional guidelines set forth by the Department of Education for the safe reopening of schools.

As we evaluated all the information that we had and saw the families which chose remote-learning increase by three-fold, the only sensible and safe decision is to start our year fully remote, as many of our sending districts have already declared. For us, this means full remote instruction during the month of September, with the goal of a transition to our previously proposed hybrid model starting on October 1st. For many of our students, depending on their cohort, this would impact approximately eight (8) days of in-person instruction.

Our goal, as always, is to provide the best “whole child” education while also providing a safe and secure learning environment. As this becomes more critical during these times, remote instruction during September is necessary.

This decision was not made in haste, and we are very much aware that remote instruction to start our school year is an added hardship on our families; but this decision to postpone in-person instruction was necessary. This additional time allows us to resolve some of the following concerns:

- solving last minute staffing issues;
- further readying our building for the return of staff and children;
- providing additional staff training specific to changes in daily functioning because of COVID;
- developing and providing a parent training component;
- and having an independent service provider thoroughly evaluate our HVAC system, and make any necessary modifications.

Please understand that this decision was not easy, since as educators we know that in-person instruction is the most optimal learning environment for children; however, we must also ensure an orderly and safe reopening of our school. We are also aware that remote instruction has had mixed successes for our children. Please know that modifications have been and will continue to be made in meeting our children’s individual and specific needs.
We would like to reassure you that we have learned quite a bit from last year’s experience. We agree that a change is essential; and teachers will be providing daily, live instruction. Students will also be meeting in real-time with teachers, and attendance will be taken daily.

We appreciate the feedback that our school community has provided and understand how challenging this reality has been for so many families. Regardless of the schooling model, our goal remains to provide students with meaningful educational experiences within the safest environment that we can create.

As we receive additional information, it will be shared with you.

Thank you,

Tony Gebbia, Executive Director
Tom Nolan, Principal
Cheryl Lentini, Assistant Principal