



*David N. Gentile, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools*

329 Route 73,
Voorhees, NJ 08043
(856) 751-8446, ext. 6122
gentile@voorhees.k12.nj.us

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

I want to provide an update on the current status of our schools' schedules. As you know, the district is currently operating a full remote learning schedule for the general education students and a hybrid schedule for the students eligible for special education. On January 4, 2021, we hope to return all students enrolled in hybrid learning to in-person learning according to their cohort schedule.

However, there are challenges to this plan that I would like to share to keep you informed. The Southwest Region of NJ, which includes Camden County, has been in the High-Risk, Orange Level of the Risk Matrix for three consecutive weeks. The NJ Department of Health has issued additional guidelines for district officials to adhere to due to being placed in the Orange Level. One such guideline pertains to contact tracing and quarantining of individuals who come into close contact with someone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. Before the new guidelines were enacted, we struggled with the contact tracing guidelines for those deemed close contacts with someone testing positive with COVID-19. That led to having staff members placed on quarantine and required substitutes. The rising number of reported COVID-19 cases was already diminishing our available pool of qualified substitutes. We are currently required to contact trace when we receive a positive COVID-19 report and when a person reports having multiple symptoms of COVID-19. You can likely imagine the difficulty this new requirement creates for the district. When we receive a report that a member of our community is COVID-19 positive or is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, we implement a 48-hour look-back period to determine possible close contacts. During that look-back period, anyone who is suspected of having been within 6 ft of the individual for a total of 15 minutes or longer is required to quarantine.

We will continue to monitor the county data to determine the best course of action moving forward. Earlier this week, county superintendents met for the third time since November 20, 2020, with the Camden County Health Department (CCDOH) to review the NJDOH COVID-19 Weekly Activity Report. The Southwest Region has

demonstrated a case positivity rate that exceeds the Very High Risk, Red Level criterion on the Risk Matrix. Specifically, the case rate has averaged 42.9 over the past three reports (the rate was 5.93 in October at the start of our hybrid model), surpassing the Red Level--Very High-Risk mark: > 25. The rates for Camden County are higher than the entire Southwest region, as reported today. The case rate for Camden County is 61.2, second highest in the State and above the State average of 45.5. As mentioned above, the High-Risk designation imposes new contact tracing parameters, which is expected to lead to even greater numbers of school community members required to quarantine.

Camden County leads the State in *School Outbreaks*, a designation limited by tracing a case to a probable outside source. As Governor Murphy referenced yesterday, the incidents of the virus being brought onto school campuses are the most common disruptive force more so than any failure of safety protocols within the school. The Voorhees Township School community has continued to receive reported cases of COVID-19 among staff and students. Our nurses have done an excellent job assisting in investigating reported cases among students and staff members in consultation with the CCDOH. We have both students and staff members who are currently in quarantine. Thus, our community's number of cases directly impacts our ability to have in-person learning within our schools.

Please limit your social interactions and activities, as recommended by the NJ Department of Health and Center for Disease Control, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. When you must be outside of your home, please wear your face covering and practice social distancing wherever feasible. We have to work together to reduce the overall spread of COVID-19 in our communities so our schools can resume in-person learning.

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

David Gentile

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Superintendent