



# Evesham Township School District

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Dr. Justin Smith, Superintendent  
Mr. John Recchinti, School Business Administrator

Ms. Danielle T. Magulick, Director of Curriculum & Instruction  
Mr. Richard G. Dantine, Jr., Director of Personnel

August 28, 2020

Dear ETSD Families,

I am emailing you today with information on topics including Air, Masks, Buses, and Full Remote. Our [ETSD Reopening Plan](#) has been approved by our County Superintendent and meets all the NJDOE checklist items required for Reopening. All conversations about enhancements are because the “E” in ETSD stands for “Excellence,” meaning we are always listening, learning, and looking for ways to improve. Key points will be reiterated in future communication as well.

Thanks to the ongoing Herculean efforts of our administrators, supervisors, facilities personnel, Transportation, secretaries, support staff, Special Services, and more, along with the invaluable support of our Board of Education, we continue to be able to open for in-person learning on Sept. 8 as scheduled. Please keep in mind that our ability to staff our schools, among other variables, continues to be a challenge. As a principal and I were reviewing classrooms in one of our schools this week, several teachers of those rooms came in to work on their own preparations. Their professionalism, dedication, and excitement were abundantly evident.

“High Expectations, High Supports” is a mindset we bring as educators to foster our students’ success. It is also a mindset we apply to ourselves, which is clear in our Reopening Plan which, with its emphasis on synchronous and asynchronous learning for the benefit of students, asks more of our staff than would a plan with asynchronous alone. “High Supports” comes in many forms, such as Remote Learning Wednesdays, and our plan for ionizers, explained below.

## **Air**

Our district administration and I have been speaking with our district’s Mechanical Engineer at [The DaVinci Group LLC](#) in strategizing about the best plan for enhancing our air quality, as an extra level of protection above and beyond our system, which already meets NJDOE requirements. An increasing number of districts are installing ionization, which provides the equivalent of MERV13 filter protection against COVID-19. The vast majority of districts, including ETSD, use MERV 8 filters, and those districts’ HVAC systems, like ours, cannot upgrade to MERV13, without completely replacing the system. Our Mechanical Engineer recommends using ionization as our best approach for adding extra protection. Ionization is air-purifying technology that eliminates bacteria, mold, and viruses including COVID-19 from the air and surfaces. It makes safe schools even safer.

Pending Board approval, we will order and install the ionizers on afternoons, evenings, and Remote Learning Wednesdays. Delivery times vary up to 8-10 weeks due to high and ever-increasing demand by school districts and other organizations. This approach enables our Reopening Plan to continue as scheduled, preserving the in-person learning starting Sept. 8 that 72.5% of our families are counting on.

Ionization costs much more than other steps like ventilation testing; however, the greater safety gains through ionization justify the expense. Ionization’s extra level of protection will accomplish permanent change on top of our many existing safety measures. We are preparing budgetary adjustments to be able to afford the ionizers.

More information about this plan will be shared in the time ahead. Here are some [Resources related to Ionization](#).

### **Masks, not Gaiters or Valves**

[Neck gaiters](#) and [mask valves](#) are not permitted for anyone in our buildings. Masks must have ear loops or ties, and not have valves. This is an added precaution. Parents, thank you in advance for your help with this.

### **Buses**

Bus routes are not just bus routes this year. They are plans based on CDC guidelines. So far we have been able to schedule 50% of our buses to have fewer than 12 students, enabling us to sit the students at 1 per row, instead of 1 per bench, in those cases. I am grateful to our Transportation Office for their ongoing work to create our bus routes, a process much more complicated this year than ever before, and with less time to accomplish than ever before.

*Starting today, any changes that parents request related to busing will need to wait until after Sept. 8, as we are working to finalize our bus routes in time to share with you before Sept. 8. Also, we cannot accommodate providing different bus stops for the same student on different days and are only able to assign each student to the same bus stop AM and PM. Thank you very much for your understanding.*

### **Full Remote**

27.5% of our families chose the Full Remote option, representing a number of students that is larger than the total student population of some Burlington and Camden County school districts. Pages 34-36 of our [ETSD Reopening Plan](#), among others, describes Full Remote.

Full remote students will receive the same quality and scope of instruction as hybrid/in-person students do. Our full remote option is like a school day. Teachers will follow a similar schedule to the traditional school day with all required subject areas being taught. Middle School full remote students are part of hybrid/in-person classes and will follow the regular day schedule. It is an expectation that all students will begin the day by joining their assigned homeroom via Google Meet where attendance will be taken. After this meeting, students will be following their regular daily schedule. This will include all content areas including Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Related Arts/Electives.

It is an expectation at elementary school that all students will begin their morning with a Morning Meeting where attendance will be taken. After this meeting, students will be following their regular daily schedule. This will include all subject areas including Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science/Social Studies/Health, Related Arts and Spanish. Teachers may develop synchronous and asynchronous learning schedules that meet the needs of particular cohorts of students. This may include, but is not limited to: frontloading live lessons to allow for asynchronous work to occur at an alternate time, as needed; scheduling small group Meets at different times throughout the day to allow for ample time for movement and synchronous learning; and offering specific “office hours” at the end of the day once students are working asynchronously when students can have access to the teacher for questions, clarifications, remodeling, etc.

Our ES staff teaching full remote will reach out to their students and share their remote schedules by Thursday, Sept. 3. We tried to pair ES teachers on full remote with ES full remote students as much as possible. Most full remote teachers are paired with students just from the home school. A few full remote teachers are paired with students from multiple schools. The mindset that “All staff are ETSD staff” is important for all of us, as both the pandemic and future unavoidable budget cuts will continue to necessitate staff shifts.

Parents have asked me how our transition back to in-person learning for everyone will go. It will depend on NJDOE/CDC guidance and health conditions. We would need every classroom to be able to accommodate every student. Some of our teachers who are full remote due to medical reasons may need to remain full remote, which would prevent their students from keeping their same teachers if the students are transitioning to in-person learning. Our goal for all transitions will be to maintain consistency and continuity to the greatest extent possible for our students.

Continued thanks to everyone--parents, staff, community--for your flexibility and patience as we work together to provide our students a high-quality and safe education during these unprecedented times. In case of questions, your school principal is a great resource.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "S".

Dr. Justin Smith  
Superintendent