



Evesham Township School District

Meland Administration Building, 25 South Maple Avenue, Marlton, NJ 08053

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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

February 19, 2021

Dear ETSD Families,

“I love being wrong because that means, in that instant, I learned something new that day.”

--Neil deGrasse Tyson

This quote, which I saw on a classroom wall this week, encapsulates the growth mindset that our district emphasizes for our students and ourselves: always learning, always growing.

Highlights this week: On Track to Resume Full Day Schedule on March 1; Budget Update; Regarding Students Returning to Five Full Days a Week of In-Person Learning; Community Activities Page Update; and Black History Month Opportunity.

On Track to Resume Full Day Schedule on March 1

We remain on track to resume our full day schedule on Monday, March 1. This week's NJ COVID activity level report linked below shows continuing decrease statewide, and just like last week the lowest activity level among all NJ regions is in our Southwest region. Weather conditions that enable eating outside remain an important consideration.

https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID_19_Report_Week_2021_6.pdf

Budget Update

Our preliminary 2021-22 budget presentation will take place at our Board meeting this coming Thursday, February 25. This morning, the superintendents of the Lenape Region districts whose state funding is being reduced (Evesham among them as our funding is being reduced most of all) met with Assemblywoman Jean Stanfield and Assemblyman Ryan Peters for a discussion of the costs of education during COVID, especially for districts like ours and all Lenape Region districts that have provided in-person learning since September. We spoke of the importance of accelerating vaccinations for our staff and of the biggest obstacle to getting more students back in school, which is the CDC's 6 foot distancing guideline. Further steps are ensuing from this conversation. I am very thankful to Assemblywoman Stanfield and Assemblyman Peters for their time and support of our district's work and needs.

Regarding Students Returning to Five Full Days a Week of In-Person Learning

This goal should be the most important federal and state goal, supported by additional resources such as increased funding and access to vaccinations for school staff, especially since it is not achievable based on current CDC guidance. I am grateful to our staff for all they are doing to support all our students, in-person and remote, to foster growth and mitigate loss, during these times. The new CDC guidance ([Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation](#))



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released last week is aimed at helping the thousands of districts reopen nationwide that have been closed since last March, and does not provide relief from or alternatives to the CDC's 6 feet social distancing guideline followed by the Department of Education and Department of Health. Our district has been following CDC guidance all year and is working to help more students come in, classroom by classroom, seat by seat, dependent on variables like room size and the number of remote students in a given class. Every district exists in order to safely serve students--first, last, foremost.

Community Activities Page Update

Please see the latest community page addition, regarding Evesham Township summer camp:

https://www.evesham.k12.nj.us/community/community_activities

Black History Month Opportunity

Next Friday, February 26 at 12 pm, an engaging Black History Month presentation will take place featuring members of the Still Family--one of New Jersey's most prominent Black families--speaking with Congressman Andy Kim on the legacy of brothers William Still, abolitionist and "Father of the Underground Railroad," and Dr. James Still, known as the "Black Doctor of the Pines," whose historic office still stands in Medford, NJ, a mere seven miles from our administration building. This program is a partnership between the Office of Congressman Kim, the New Jersey Amistad Commission, the Dr. James Still Education Center, and Jacob's Chapel AME Church. The program is open to all students, and especially encouraged for grades 5 -12. For parents to register their student for the Zoom event, go to: <https://kim.house.gov/BlackHistoryMonth>. Our district will explore ways to benefit from this presentation curricularly. A Youtube link of the recorded presentation will be made available afterward.

For more info about this event: [Congressman Kim to Hold Black History Month Town Hall](#)

For more info about Dr. Still: [Dr. James Still Historic Office and Education Center](#)

I can only begin to imagine what obstacles William and James Still faced as they served the people of our communities and beyond. Still, they served. Still. Still.

Sincerely,

Dr. Justin Smith
Superintendent of Schools