



Orange Township Public Schools

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.
Office of the Superintendent



January 12, 2021

Greetings Orange Township Public School District Staff, Families, and Caregivers,

The continued health, safety, and well-being of our school community are the top priorities of the Board of Education, administration, faculty, and staff within the Orange Township Public School District. The district has policies in place to address the well-being of all students and staff. Policy 8451 addresses the Control of Communicable Disease. As a district, we continue to monitor the alerts from the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Department of Health, and the Center for Disease Control both locally and nationally.

On Tuesday, September 8, 2020, we began the year in Phase 1 – a virtual and remote space for both staff and students. Synchronous, in the moment, teaching and learning took place throughout the course of the day (8:30AM - 12:30 PM). Office hours and small group instruction took place beginning at 1:00 PM and concluding after 3:00 PM districtwide.

The following were the aspects of Phase 1:

- ✓ Schools intensified trainings to staff, parents, and students focused on approved digital platforms
- ✓ Teachers revisited the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge for each subject area and grade level with students
- ✓ Teachers evaluated students' unfinished learning such to provide acceleration support
- ✓ Schools integrated trauma informed/SEL programming into traditional instructional programs
- ✓ Schools disseminated the essential instructional resources that teachers must have at home based upon grade level
- ✓ Schools disseminated the "print" materials that students need for at home instruction
- ✓ Schools disseminated individualized materials for student use (manipulatives, art supplies, science/STEM lab materials, goggles), ordering more supplies than normal
- ✓ Schools developed remote synchronous schedules
- ✓ District supplied all schools and district offices with PPE and safety materials in

On Monday, October 5, 2020, the district moved into Phase 2 (Remote Synchronous) where staff returned on-site and students remained in remote instruction. In Phase 2 Remote Synchronous, teachers reported on-site 2 days per week providing virtual synchronous instruction within their designated classroom spaces. Support staff (*guidance, CST, related service providers, social workers, attendance officers*), nurses, technology coordinators, and secretaries were onsite 4 days per week. Webcams were used during instruction for at home learners. Teachers reported onsite for the length of the school day. Staff continued to follow schedules for common planning time (professional development) and other planning times.

Effective January 12, 2021, the Orange Township Public School District after discussion with health officials, is extending Phase 2 Remote Synchronous of the Return to School Plan. Again, the health and safety of all students and staff are the primary drivers regarding this decision. The following is the schedule regarding the phases through the end of the school year. Should any changes occur, all families and staff will receive ample notice for planning purposes.

New Timeline for Phases 2 through 4 (Effective: January 12, 2021)

- **Continuation of Phase 2 through February 26, 2021:** Schools will be open two days per week with Principals, Assistant Principals/Deans of Students and secretaries reporting on-site to maintain the fidelity and continuity of programming. Central Office will be open 4 days per week. To note: Department Heads will discuss scheduling with their teams. Special Note: Technology Coordinators and those testing students in the area of Special Services will receive schedules for in district support from their immediate supervisor.
- **The Week of February 22nd, teachers and support staff will report to the buildings to fine tune their areas in anticipation of student arrival on March 1, 2021.**

- **Phase 4, March 1, 2021 – June 24, 2021:** All staff and students return in a hybrid setting (combining on-site and remote learning) with staggered schedules.

Though we are still immersed in our “new normal,” staff continue to work closely with students. In addition, teachers continue to work alongside their colleagues to ensure that the instructional scenarios presented to students are differentiated, targeted, and intentional. Through professional development opportunities and collaboration, teachers are prepared to educate our students in this virtual space.

Throughout the course of this year, the reopeningofschools@orange.k12.nj.us email will remain intact in order to answer questions that you may have during this unique experience. While email responses are often returned within hours of sending, please allow 24 hours for an email response. It is very important to keeping staff and families informed, particularly during these times. I want to take this moment to thank our families for emailing us since Monday, January 4, 2021 of their intent regarding remote learning.

We are certainly in this together. I am confident that we will continue to blaze a trail filled with success and accomplishment throughout this school year and beyond.

Educationally yours,

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.

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Superintendent of Schools