



HAWTHORNE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

445 Lafayette Avenue, 2nd Floor
Hawthorne, NJ 07506
(973) 427-1300

December 21, 2021

Dear Hawthorne Families,

As a school and community, we are once again facing challenges with increasing COVID-19 cases and the subsequent quarantine period. As per the Mayor's most recent letter, our current totals are 3,309 total cases since March 2020, 47 fatalities, and 123 active cases. Currently, we have 48 students who are either COVID positive or awaiting test results in the district which is approximately 2% of our school population. In our schools, we continue to adhere to Executive Order 251, which requires masks throughout the day and we follow the NJ Department of Health K-12 guidelines to protect the well-being of our students and staff.

As the numbers in Hawthorne have increased, we have communicated with our local health officials as required by the New Jersey Department of Education to request further guidance. At this time, our local health department is aware of our current numbers and is not recommending a school or district closure. The guidance below, which is provided by the New Jersey Department of Education outlines the 180-day requirement for the 2021-2022 school year.

Remote Instruction/180-Day Requirement

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, schools must be in session for 180 days to receive state aid. The statute requires that school facilities be provided for at least 180 days during the school year. Section (b) notes that where a district is required to close the schools of the district for more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared a public health emergency, or a directive and/or recommendation by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure, days of virtual or remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction will count towards the district's 180-day requirement.

LEAs may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases amongst staff and/or students. If an LEA is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of the scenarios listed above, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the LEA should be prepared to offer virtual or remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction to the extent possible. In circumstances when the school facilities remain open and in-person instruction continues in those classrooms that are not required to quarantine, those days in session will also count towards the district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.2.

Over the next day and a half, our school nurses will continue to address any positive cases, conduct contract tracing, and notify families as deemed necessary. Finally, we would like to remind all families to please adhere to our [December 9, 2021, COVID Quarantine and Exclusion Update](#) for the remainder of this week and upon return to school on January 3, 2022.

Finally, as we close out 2021 and begin 2022, we want to thank everyone for their patience and support as we navigate these ongoing challenges. We also encourage parents to continue to visit our [Road Forward Webpage](#) to view all district communications. Please remember, we are here to answer questions and support our families so please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher, building administrator, or my office with any questions. On behalf of everyone in the Hawthorne Public Schools, we wish everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy and Healthy 2022!

With Appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. Spirito". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Richard A. Spirito