



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

Dec. 11, 2020

Dear ETSD Families,

This week's update highlights: School Reopening Status, January and February Shortened Day Schedule, Ionizers, Supporting our Cherokee HS Girls Ensemble in the B101 Choir Competition, and Snow Days Student Voice Survey Results.

Every day of learning is something to celebrate. We are more than one third of the way through the school year. Thank you to everyone who has contacted me to share thoughts and input. I gladly take what you say into consideration, as these decisions are neither easy nor clear-cut. In our mission of serving students during such difficult times, safely and with care and compassion for students and staff, it is a complex balance, with many voices from a range of perspectives, all valued.

To reiterate from prior Friday Updates, safety is always first. Each day brings new data, locally and in larger contexts, that we monitor and analyze. I am in daily communication with the county health department and superintendents from our region as we all work to make the best decisions. Every day, we balance the importance of in-person learning with the importance of health and safety.

School Reopening Status

DeMasi Middle School, Marlton Elementary School, and Marlton Middle School will reopen Monday, Dec. 14 as scheduled. Continuing in-person learning in middle school during these times can be more challenging even than in elementary school, as MS staff have contact with more students every day, and MS students have contact with more staff, than in elementary school. Since the start of the year, out of an abundance of caution, we have conducted our contact tracing district-wide far in excess of the "within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more" CDC parameter, by considering all students and staff in the classroom to be close contacts for any single case. In middle school, this means a whole grade level of teachers in a single house typically can become close contacts for a single case. I share this information as a window into the dynamics of making in-person learning work.

Re-opening brings the advantage of Winter Break in a short time, as an automatic pause. These next eight days of in-person learning, valuable in their own right, may prove even more important later this winter if temporary closure is needed again. For these reasons, and more, DMS, MES, and MMS are opening this Monday. Reasons for continued closure, district-wide full remote, and other alternatives continue to be valid and real, and to be considered daily, especially during such dynamic times.



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January and February shortened day schedule

Our shortened day schedule for January and February, to eliminate eating lunch at school during months when it is difficult to eat outside, is still in development. As may be imagined, there are many details to work out. I will share another update next week. Our full day approach has worked and is part of how we increased the typical school experience for our students this year. The majority of districts that opened for in-person learning have used the shortened day approach since the start of the year. As more districts go full remote (our county is just passing the point this week where more districts are full remote than are still open for in-person learning), we are exploring this possibility just for January and February in order to keep in-person learning going with even more safety. So far, we haven't had to go for more than a day or two at a time with lunch indoors. These decisions are complicated equations of many factors.

Ionizers

All classroom ionizers have been installed, and installation of the rooftop and larger space ionizers is underway. This means every classroom in our district now has the equivalent of MERV13 filter protection against COVID-19. Ionization is air-purifying technology that eliminates bacteria, mold, and viruses including COVID-19 from the air and surfaces. As a reminder from earlier this year, our district pursued this ionizer plan after consultation with our district's mechanical engineering firm, DaVinci Group LLC, about the best approach for enhancing our air quality. The ionizers are an extra level of permanent improved protection above and beyond our system, which already meets NJDOE requirements. For more information, please visit these links:

- [Classroom ionizer](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Ionization Resources](#)

Supporting our Cherokee HS Girls Ensemble in the B101 Choir Competition

The Cherokee High School Girls Ensemble has been selected as semi-finalists in the B101 Christmas Choir Competition! Their recording of "Jingle Bell Rock" will be played at 7 AM on Monday, Dec. 14th on 101.1 FM. Voting opens shortly after 7 AM on Dec. 14th at www.b101philly.com and continues throughout the day. Please vote often as the winner of this round goes onto the final round with a grand prize of \$5,000. These talented high schoolers are graduates of our district, and make us all so proud!



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Snow Days Student Voice Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who completed this survey. The top vote-getter was....(drum roll)...Choice 3--“We use Choice 1 for the first 3 snow days (if needed), then beyond that, Choice 2.” Choice 1 means the day is a snow day like in the past...it is a day off from school, and an extra school day will need to be added to the end of the school year in June. Choice 2 means the day is not a snow day...it is a day of school, a full remote learning day for all students, and no extra day will need to be added at the end of the school year in June. For Cohort R students, the day will be like any Cohort R day. For Cohort A students, the day will be like a Cohort B day. For Cohort B students, the day will be like a Cohort A day. For Cohort AB students, the day will be like any Cohort AB day, except remotely. So, in a nutshell, if snow days are needed, our first 3 snow days will feel like snow days.

Thank you,

Dr. Justin Smith
Superintendent of Schools