



Levittown LEADER

REVIVING UP for Reopening

After a unique end to the 2019-20 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, central and building administrators, Board members, district directors and staff worked together to establish a plan to allow students to return to the school buildings in September. With schools across the country facing the same reopening dilemma, the district formed a Reopening Task Force and partnered with community members, students, parents, the Nassau County Health Department, the Levittown District medical director, the Levittown District legal counsel and others, to create a safe and effective plan for the new school year.

Members of the task force worked diligently to pinpoint the following key areas: building protocols, health and safety, elementary and secondary instruction, special education and transportation. Due to their hard work and dedication, the district was able to establish a new normal

for staff, students and their families.

Following local and state health guidelines, each school building put safety measures in place prior to the first day of school. This included adding signs to promote healthy habits, social distancing markers throughout the hallways, hand sanitizer stations and carts, temperature scanning machines and water dispensers to replace water fountains. All Levittown students and their families also had the option of selecting one of two instructional models to start the school year. This included returning to school in some capacity or following a fully remote model. At the elementary level, students were allowed to return to in-person learning five days a week. Due to the larger number of students in the secondary buildings, those who did not select remote learning would follow a hybrid model, attending school



Jonas E. Salk Middle School students returned to the classrooms on Sept. 8, wearing masks and seated 6 feet apart.

every other day. Changes to these instructional models can occur at any time, as the district is closely monitoring the current health crisis. More information about these health and safety and instruction changes, along with the other task force work, can be found inside this edition of the Leader.

Although this new normal has been an adjustment for everyone, students and staff have embraced the changes and have showcased their resiliency. Students returned to the schools on the first day with smiles under their masks, excited to see their peers again and meet their new teachers. Virtual learners got creative at home, with many transforming their spaces into their own classrooms, ready for the school year.

“Whether in person or virtually, we are excited to be reunited with our students again,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tonie McDonald. “I am so proud of the way our administrators, faculty and staff have worked together to make our schools a safe, clean and welcoming space. School may look different this year, but we will continue to provide opportunities that will lead to success for every student.”

With this ever-changing pandemic, the community is encouraged to continue to check the district’s website, www.levittownschools.com, to stay connected and informed. We thank you for your support and patience as we navigate this new school year.

REOPENING TASK FORCE:

Committed to a *Safe Return*

Central and building administrators, directors, staff, students, parents and community members banded together to establish new protocols and guidance for a successful 2020-21 school year in the COVID-19 era.



New protocols have not stopped students from learning. Northside first grader Cooper Oellantoni helped paint as part of a class project related to nouns.



Remote learner Anabelle Maria, a fifth grader from East Broadway Elementary, had her home desk ready for the first day of school.



Gardiners Avenue students take a mask break outside while keeping their distance.

Instruction and Special Education

Getting students back into a school routine, especially with changes in place, was a challenge that the district was ready to take on. Technical devices are used to support student learning, and teachers have been encouraged to utilize outdoor space to hold lessons. Although there are some similarities, a typical school day for an elementary student looks different than for a secondary student.

Students in grades K-5 are in our buildings every day if they did not choose to follow remote learning. Classrooms were rearranged during the summer months to allow for 6 feet of distance between desks. As a result, some classroom furniture was removed. Specials are still taking place, just in a different format, with special area teachers such as art and music pushing into classrooms. Elementary students are also scheduled for a recess period but with one class in a designated area at a time.

At the middle and high schools, classrooms were also rearranged for students and staff to adhere to the 6 feet of distance guideline. With a higher volume of students in each secondary building, a hybrid model was established for students who preferred to not be fully remote. The hybrid model allows students to attend school in-person every other day based on their cohort. When they are not learning in person, students are receiving instruction remotely, usually with a live teacher and class. Sixth grade students at the middle schools have the unique opportunity to attend school even on their remote days. Those who wish to work in the building are supervised in large areas while they complete their remote assignments.

During this unprecedented time, it was important for the district to still provide consistent special education services for students. This includes supplying the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids, services and technology to meet the needs of students. Depending on what instructional model a family has selected for their child, special education services as per a student's Individualized Education Program are taking place either virtually or in person. Administrators and staff members are working hard to ensure that these students receive the guidance and tools that they need on a daily basis.



Remote and hybrid students from Division Avenue High School in Grace Wheeler's Advanced Placement Biology class worked together on a hands-on lab about the properties of water.



Desk shields can be found in the elementary school classrooms, such as here at Lee Road Elementary School.



Building Protocols and Health and Safety

It was important for staff, students and their families to feel comfortable about reentering our buildings. To ensure a safe reopening, the district provided staff training on the new COVID-19 protocols such as hand hygiene, proper face coverings, social distancing and respiratory hygiene. The district also looked closely at students who are at high risk or live with a high-risk person. Accommodations were able to be made for these students. In addition, each classroom was examined to determine how many students could fit in a socially distant manner, and school safety drills were modified to follow social distancing guidelines. Other health and safety measures include:

- Requiring face coverings for all who enter the school buildings. Students are allowed to remove their masks during short mask breaks and during meals.
- Conducting temperature screenings upon arrival for all staff and students. Temperatures exceeding 100°F are denied entry.
- Creating isolation rooms in each of the schools. Students or staff with symptoms are assessed by a school nurse and are sent home based on evaluation.
- Adding hand sanitizing stations throughout the buildings.
- Providing desk shields in elementary classrooms.
- Disinfecting classrooms at the end of each day.
- Changing the protocol for lunch. Elementary school students eat lunch in their classroom while secondary students eat lunch at individual desks, 6 feet apart, in the cafeteria.
- Promoting mental health resources and providing support for students and their families.
- Limiting visitors from entering the buildings.
- Assisting the Nassau County Department of Health in contact tracing for anyone in our district who tests positive for COVID-19.

Transportation

The district worked closely with the State Education Department and the Department of Health to ensure that busing could be maintained in a safe and efficient manner this year. Safety measures that have been put in place include:

- Compliance with updated Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards.
- PPE for drivers and bus attendants. This includes gloves for those who may have direct physical contact with students. All students wear facing coverings.
- A self-health assessment taken daily by all staff before work.
- Training on new health protocols before the first day of school.
- Family seating on buses.

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REMOTE LEARNING Rolls On



Wisdom Lane eighth grader Alexis Garcia in Katie McWalters' Spanish class used Google Slides to create her own Bitmoji Locker to introduce herself to her peers. Students were asked to include photos of items in their locker to showcase what they like to do, what their favorite class is, what music or movies they prefer, and other things that are important to them.

Remote learner Stephen Allinger, a first grader from Summit Lane Elementary School, practiced his math skills at home.



Students who are fully remote or hybrid this year have embraced distance learning. Teachers have found creative ways to connect to these students and give them an enriching class experience despite the instructional shift. The district uses Google platforms such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Google Breakout Rooms and Google Slides to deliver instruction and foster collaboration. Teachers have also incorporated other educational technology resources into their lessons. This includes utilizing tools such as Flipgrid, Kahoot and Nearpod. The district will continue to evaluate the remote and hybrid models as the school year progresses with the ultimate goal of having all students back in the school buildings full time.



"The students have the option to present their materials to one another to make sure they are annotating the same things or to show the work they were responsible for completing. I can watch all students in all groups at the same time. This now places the onus on the students and helps them in becoming responsible for their learning. It promotes them to be active participants in their education, all while letting me guide them along the way. A bonus is that they are also getting that face-to-face (virtually) interaction at a safe distance but allowing them to grow socially and academically."

— Lisa Nessler, teacher at MacArthur High School regarding Google Meet Breakout Rooms.



Remote and hybrid sixth graders at Wisdom Lane Middle School used a clay tablet and a stylus to write in cuneiform after learning about Ancient Mesopotamia.



The morning announcements broadcast at MacArthur High School has been a great way for both remote and hybrid students to connect and stay informed on what is happening at the school.



Remote learners in the second grade showed off their superhero costumes during Superhero Day.



Third graders in Nicole Wolfe's remote class created rain gauges out of water bottles during science.

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