

## OCEAN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

501 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 1  
Ocean City, New Jersey 08226 – 3891  
Phone: (609) 399-5150  
[www.oceancityschools.org](http://www.oceancityschools.org)



January 26, 2021

Dear School Community:

On **Monday, February 1**, the Ocean City School District will welcome students in grades K-5 back to school 5 days a week for in-person learning. Our recent survey results show near-unanimous support among our families for this move. Staff members are equally enthusiastic, and we're preparing to make next Monday a celebratory day for our students.

### **Changes for Grades K-5 – Starting Feb. 1**

Our K-5 students in our two hybrid cohorts, O and C, will form one group to attend school together, each day for in-person learning. Class sizes allow for 6 feet between each student's desk. In fact, we will take 4 safety measures per classroom to help prevent the spread of illness and boost our chances of sustaining this new format: 1) social distancing; 2) mask wearing by all students and staff; 3) all student desks facing one direction; and 4) plexiglass shields for each student's desk. We already had these plexiglass barriers in the Primary School, and we're adding them to the Intermediate School this week. We have also ordered additional PPE for our teachers, including KN-95 masks and face shields.

We will arrange the Primary School cafeteria to resemble that of the Intermediate School, with 6-foot tables that sit a student on each end and have a plexiglass barrier separating them. Each table will be spaced 6 feet apart.

Minor changes are being finalized for student bus assignments at the Primary School. Families will be contacted directly this week by the school if their student's bus assignment is being changed in conjunction with the upcoming schedule modification. There are no changes in bus assignments for students attending the Intermediate School at this time. Please know that the students most likely will not be sitting 6' from another passenger. However, all the students and bus drivers will wear masks. If you have questions, please contact your child's school or Mr. Tim Kelley at [tkelley@ocsdnj.org](mailto:tkelley@ocsdnj.org).

Our virtual learners in grades K-5 will also notice a change on February 1, because our teachers will begin live streaming their lessons. You may hear us refer to this as concurrent teaching. We piloted this type of instruction at the high school level and received positive feedback. That trial period also gave us time to assess our bandwidth, and we can now move forward with confidence to livestream our classes and support the necessary uploads and downloads that go with it. If you require additional technology assistance, please visit our [Information Technology Services Help Desk](#).

### **Changes for Grades 6-8 – Starting Feb. 8**

On February 8, we will add concurrent teaching for students in grades 6-8 and add one more day of in-person instruction on Wednesdays. The cohorts will rotate to attend school on Wednesday according to the following schedule:

- Wednesday, Feb. 10 – Cohort O will attend school.
- Wednesday, Feb. 17 – Due to the Presidents Day holiday this week, the new schedule will not apply.
- Wednesday, Feb. 24 – Cohort C will attend school.

After that, the rotation will continue on alternating weeks.



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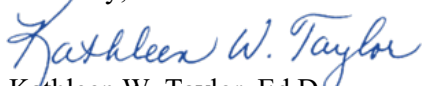
### **Social-Emotional Learning**

As we begin to welcome students back for more in-person time, we plan to accelerate our efforts to incorporate social-emotional learning into our students' experiences, with additional emphasis on building resiliency and mindfulness. At both the Primary and Intermediate schools, the Wellness Wednesday initiative will expand to meet student needs five days a week. A member of each school's Wellness Team will visit classrooms regularly to provide in-person lessons for the students now coming to school 5 days a week, and those attending school virtually will benefit from that content via livestreaming.

The changes ahead mark the start of our transition back to a more traditional school schedule in the Ocean City School District. We are starting with our youngest students, who are at a critical stage in their learning and development. They will come to school more consistently, with enhanced safety measures in place. If you have questions, please contact your child's principal.

These are exciting steps, but we are not done. We will continue to do what we have done since the onset of the pandemic: Keep the focus on our students. Thank you for supporting us in our pursuit of that goal, and thank you to our administrative team, teachers, custodians and support staff and our School Board – especially the COVID Committee – for working together to make each day this school year better than the last. Let's keep moving forward at OCSD!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen W. Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen W. Taylor, Ed.D.  
Superintendent