



EATONTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

5 GRANT AVENUE

EATONTOWN, NJ 07724

TEL. (732) 935-3323

FAX (732) 578-0017



SCOTT T. MCCUE
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

February 12, 2021

Dear Eatontown School Community Member:

The district has now entered the Third Marking Period. Since September 8, 2020, the district has operated consistently using the Hybrid A/B, one-session day schedule. The reasons for the reliability in the school schedule most likely stem from maintaining six feet of social distance in classrooms, the requirement that all students and staff wear face coverings, upgraded cleaning and disinfecting protocols, as well as additional opportunities in the school day for handwashing and hand-sanitizing. Student and staff fidelity to these procedures has been greatly appreciated.

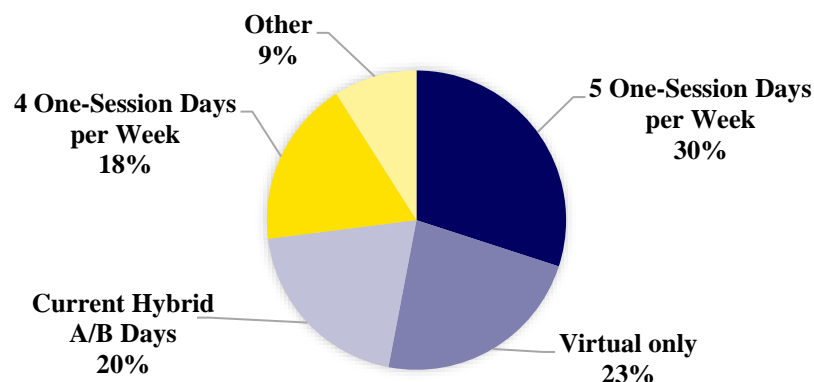
As COVID-19 case numbers begin to decrease in our region, the school schedule debate has certainly ramped up in our community, county, state, and nation. Please understand, the Board of Education, Administration, teachers, support staff, and other educational professionals all want to see students in school on a more frequent basis. However, this important desire needs to be balanced by ensuring any new school schedule can be sustained over an extended period of time. COVID-19 is a virus that spreads easily indoors and when the density of people is higher within a certain area. Part of the reason for our district's success has been maintaining appropriate density levels in our classrooms and schools.

On November 18, 2020, the district issued Phase 2 Parent and Staff surveys. At that time, the surveys asked parents and staff for their input on possible reopening options. Unfortunately, COVID-19 cases began to dramatically increase at this same time. The district experienced this rise of COVID-19 cases and its impact from November through January.

The results of the Parent survey were as follows:

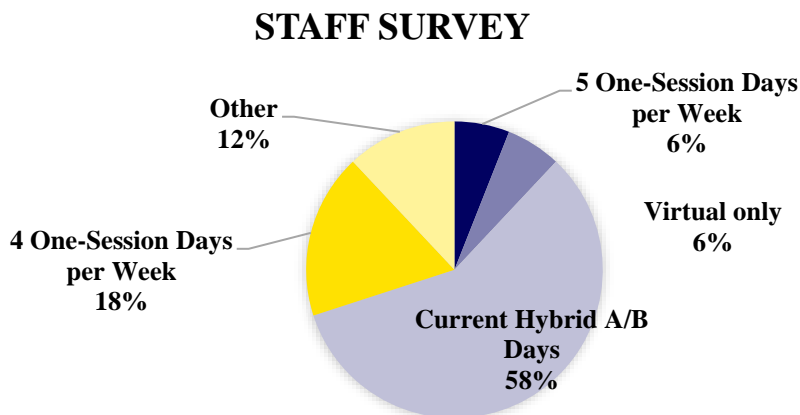
- The district received 357 responses or about 50% of the district responded.
- Thirty percent of the respondents opted for a five day per week plan using one-session days.
- Twenty-three percent said that students should continue to attend virtually.
- Twenty percent stated the district should maintain the current Hybrid A/B Day schedule.
- Eighteen percent selected a four day a week schedule with one-session days.
- About nine percent were other responses.

PARENT SURVEY



The Staff Survey had a high participation rate and yielded a clearer consensus. The results were as follows:

- Fifty-eight percent selected maintaining the current Hybrid A/B Day schedule.
- Eighteen percent opted for a four day a week schedule using one-session days.
- Six percent selected students should continue to attend virtually.
- Six percent opted for the five day a week schedule using one-session days.



Moving forward, the district continues to work with the School Physician and Monmouth County Health Department in order to make educational decisions based upon science and data. Each school community is different and has different variables to consider. As of the latest COVID-19 Activity Level Report dated February 6, 2021, our region is still in the Orange Level, or High Range. The good news is that cases are decreasing. One additional point of perspective needs to be made; when the district opened on September 8, 2020, our region was in the Green Level, or Low Range.

The Board of Education and Administration take student learning and development very seriously. During the 2020-2021 school year, the district has offered:

- Quality computers to students and staff to support remote learning from Preschool through Grade 8.
- Hot spots to provide quality internet access for families.
- Free meals through our district lunch program.
- Additional meals through Fulfill.
- Continued services such as Basic Skills, Special Education, ESL, and Gifted and Talented.
- Lessons in Social and Emotional Learning through a new, research-based program called Leader in Me.
- Access to YMCA counseling and VNA services.

In March, the district will discuss options and plans to increase students' in-person time in school. This continues to be our goal. However, this desire needs to be balanced with careful planning in order to develop a schedule that is sustainable and reliable in the future. Some parents have asked why the district does not use Plexiglass barriers in order to bring more students into the classrooms. One limitation of this plan is that Plexiglass barriers are not considered part of the equation for appropriate social distancing. This means that if a student is COVID-19 positive, depending on where the student is sitting, most of the class or the entire class may need to be quarantined according to the direct contact guidelines.

Please stay healthy and well. The district appreciates your support in these very challenging, unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Scott T. McCue
Superintendent of Schools