

**MOSS SCHOOL**  
**16 Simpson Place**  
**Metuchen, New Jersey 08840**  
**"A Great Place to Grow"**

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*A National & New Jersey School of Character*



3/24/2021

Dear Moss community,

As always, I want to start by expressing immense gratitude. At this time, when I ask myself, "What am I most appreciative about when it comes to this wonderful Moss community?" I am appreciative of all the patience of our parents, students and staff. For a long time now, we have all had many wants and hopes for many things put on hold and without knowing exactly when the withholding would end. We are, unfortunately, still in a moment of great uncertainty and need of withholding. The current COVID positivity rate and number of cases in Metuchen are rising above their highest rates in months; there is still a need for more patience. However, there are so many positive things occurring now, with your kids really gaining momentum in their academic learning as well as skills that will help them strengthen their emotional intelligence and resilience (some of the greatest indicators of success at school, at work and in life). And there is a lot of reason for hope for more good things to come soon.

Copy pasted below is an update on Moss School presented by Dr. Vincent Caputo, Superintendent, to the Board of Education, which can be viewed on MeTV once posted. Two main highlights from the presentation are listed specifically below, and highlighted in the text:

1. The recommendation by Moss School to offer every day attendance to all students starting April 26th. This recommendation is pending a number of health factors that will have to be considered heavily by the school, Superintendent and board, as we get closer to the date. But if conditions are conducive, we will be ready to offer safe, every day attendance to all students.
2. Opening up our doors 5 minutes earlier beginning Monday, April 5, 2021.
  - a. AM session will start at 8:30AM instead of 8:35AM
  - b. PM session will start at 12:10PM instead of 12:15PM

Here is a copy paste of the updates presented last night to the board:

**Glow for Moss:**

**1. Right Amount of Breaks**

- a. Kindergarten teachers doing a great job implementing workshop model across the board
- b. MIPP and K teachers are aware of and practice before hybrid and throughout hybrid learning:
  - i. developmentally appropriate timeframes for direct instruction
  - ii. brain breaks/short movement and dance videos to get the kids up and blood flowing at school and at home

2. **Daily Schedule (greatest success).** Abundance of communication provided before school started to parents about what the schedule would be to the very minute via:

- a. Letters from Principal before school started,
- b. Zoom discussion with principal and parents before school started,
- c. Teachers posted for all parents their instructional schedule
- d. Discussed at length at Back to School night
- e. Working individually with families to resolve any struggles at home with the schedule.

3. **Understanding Academic Concepts (second greatest success)** – keys to success have been:

- a. Implementing the same curriculum
- b. Implementing workshop model,
- c. Teachers successfully translating curriculum activities to online tools and individual packets every two weeks for at home practice
- d. Transportation department, drivers, aides and especially Marissa Plancher worked extremely hard this year to make sure all kids have all the learning materials delivered to their door every two weeks to support their understanding of academic concepts.

#### **Grows for Moss:**

1. **Connecting with Peers:**

- a. **Opening Moss school for everyday attendance April 26, 2021**
- b. Opening access to the playground for all students after-school AM and PM
- c. **Starting arrival 5 minutes earlier, extending arrival recess time for 5 more minutes starting after Spring Break**
- d. Planning an outdoor Spring Extravaganza for in-person and remote only students to be able to re-connect

2. **Students Coping with Their Emotions**

- a. Embedding emotional recognition and regulation SEL competencies into daily routine through SELf-questions and zones of regulation further: “How do I feel? What zone is that? What can I do to help myself feel better?”
- b. Moss teachers brainstorming intervention strategies and additional supports
- c. Moss teachers will turn key to their peers intervention strategies and resources that they have found successful to all Moss staff at the April 7 staff meeting
- d. Providing small group session for students with Moss School Psychologist and intern
- e. District SAC providing support for parents and families needing more individualized support

3. **Additional Support for Parents**

- a. Moss teachers brainstorming strategies / additional supports for parents
- b. Moss teachers will turn key to their peers strategies and resources that they have found successful to all Moss staff at the April 7 staff meeting
- c. Moss will conduct a parent forum for sharing ideas and supports Moss parents have found helpful

I promise to update all as data and conditions influential to the decision to open fully or stay in hybrid is received in early and mid-April and will work to provide as much notice in advance as possible. In the meantime, thank you for remaining patient, drop your child off at arrival 5 minutes earlier so they can get some more play time with their peers, keep your eyes out for an upcoming letter from me with info on the PTO Book Fair, PTO Spring Extravaganza, the potential for Moss School pictures, and a Moss Parent Forum. Keep asking your children to ask themselves, “How do I feel?” and “What can I do to help myself feel better?”. and of course, continue to stay safe.

Have a wonderful holiday with family and friends and enjoy some time for recreation during the vacation. Please let us know if you have any questions at any time.

Best,

Rick