

CRESSKILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Mr. Michael Burke
Superintendent

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Good Afternoon,

It was great seeing so many community members at our annual 5K race on Sunday. Despite the challenges facing our district, it was a wonderful reminder of the support we continue to receive from the Cresskill community. Here is an update to the status of the High/Middle School building:

Q: What is the current status of the building evaluation by FEMA?

A: We had our second meeting with FEMA today, and they have begun the process of reviewing the work needed to restore our school. They have separated our claims into three distinct groups: temporary remediation, relocation, and permanent repairs/future mitigation. I cannot thank the FEMA representatives enough for their help with this process, but we are still at a standstill until the money is allocated from FEMA to our district. Legally, we cannot authorize work to be completed until that money has been approved and the board has obtained temporary financing. That process is estimated to take between 2-4 weeks, which is too much of a delay for our students and families. This is why I have asked the various Home & School Associations (HSA), Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), and Korean Parents Association (KPA) to lead our fundraising efforts. Any money raised through these wonderful groups will be used to immediately fund the cost of various needs to reopen the building, such as temporary heating, asbestos abatement, mold removal, drywall repair, and new desks/chairs in the classrooms. Any monies received allows the building preparation to start immediately instead of waiting for FEMA approval. Once FEMA has allocated funds to our district, any remaining money donated by our community will be put towards the repair of the permanent classrooms, auditorium repair, media center repair, etc.

Q: What is the status of the St. Therese School as a temporary school for our students?

A: We did not receive the Certificate of Occupancy this week as expected due to a small area of exposed piping in the ceiling of the classrooms. Since the building is being leased, the

responsibility falls on contractors from the Archdiocese to repair the work before we can hold daily classes for our students. A company is onsite today making the necessary repairs. We hope to have the Certificate of Occupancy and Department of Ed approvals by the end of this week.

Q: What is the status of the HS/MS Building?

A: Thanks to the creative opportunities from resident Mr. Tomer Barkan, we will have the temporary heating onsite later this week. We have now focused our full attention towards getting the necessary approvals for students to return to the building. Since the building was temporarily closed due to the flood, we are required now to obtain necessary inspections before we can allow any students or staff to return. This is to ensure the utmost safe environment for all. In addition to the required inspections, there is work to be completed to get these classrooms ready, even for temporary purposes. We have received quotes for asbestos abatement and mold remediation, both of which are necessary in several of the rooms. Once those clearances have been received, we will be able to return students and staff to a section of the building, while other sections are permanently repaired.

Q: What will be the schedule for in-person instruction once the buildings are ready?

A: There are two possible scenarios that could occur with the two properties.

- 1) It is imperative that we provide in-person instruction for all of our 6th-12th grade students as quickly as possible. If both the St. Therese School and HS/MS building can open within a reasonable time period of each other, we will utilize the following schedule:
 - 6th-9th grade students attending St. Therese on a rotating basis
 - 10th-12th grade students attending school in the HS/MS on a rotating basis

The specific details of the schedule are still being finalized, due to the unknown number of rooms that will be available in the HS/MS. We are hoping for at least 20 rooms for daily use, which would allow for almost every 10th-12th grade student to return to the HS/MS building.

- 2) If the opening of the HS/MS building is delayed by unforeseen circumstances, such as a delay in inspection approvals, we will return all seven grades to St. Therese on a rotating basis. It is not fair to have certain grades return to the building for in-person instruction while others stay remote for several weeks. If the difference is only one week, that is reasonable. However, if the in-person instructional difference is multiple weeks, the best

decision would be to have all students return to St. Therese on a rotating basis until the HS/MS building is ready for occupancy.

The variables and challenges continue to evolve daily, and are a source of great frustration for all of us. However, we have made great progress in the 39 days since the start of the school year, and will continue to work tirelessly to return our students and staff to an in-person instructional environment.

I will provide more information as it becomes available. I hope to have more finalized plans by next Monday's Board of Education meeting.

Best,
Michael Burke
Superintendent of Schools