



02-18-2022 K12 Alert - Community Letter

February 18, 2022

Dear Croton-Harmon Community:

As we enter the Winter Recess, I hope that all of you were able to find joy in the Spirit Week events that took place at each of our schools this week. It was wonderful to see our students and staff members celebrating this week's various representations of Tiger Pride. As always, we appreciate your time in reading through the updates and information about our schools which are shared below.

Winter Recess: As a reminder, our district's schools will be closed Monday, February 21 through Friday, February 25 for the Winter Recess. We hope that our Tiger students, families, and staff members have a great break! The District Office will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, February 21 and 22.

Architectural and Engineering Firm Selection Process: Recently, the district issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for architectural and engineering services. The scope of the project encompasses our Building Condition Survey (a complete review of all of our facilities and listing of needed priorities for improvement), support in creating our district's new Five Year Plan for facilities enhancements, a study of the feasibility of installing artificial turf and making other improvements to the Spencer Field athletic facility, district-wide drainage work, installation of air conditioning for the Kindergarten classrooms at CET, and general architectural and engineering services.

The district received proposals from five architectural firms in response to the RFP and assembled a selection committee with representation from the Board of Education, staff, and administration to evaluate the proposals. Two firms were selected to take part in committee interviews last Friday. Based on the feedback from that committee, the administration plans to make a recommendation to the Board of Education at an upcoming meeting as to the firm that is best positioned to support our work in these areas going forward. Upon selecting the firm, we will then engage in developing a timeline for the work associated with these various projects, and we will make sure to keep the community regularly informed.

Positive COVID-19 Cases In Our Schools: Last week, we shared with you an update regarding the number of COVID positive cases among our students and staff members. Again this week, I am very pleased to share with you that this number continues to decline. During the week of January 10 - 14, 63 students or staff members tested positive for COVID. Last

week, 6 students or staff members tested positive, and this week, that number has decreased to 4.

Distribution of COVID-19 Rapid Tests: As a reminder, and in follow-up to our communication on Wednesday of this week, all Tiger students will be sent home today with a box of COVID-19 rapid tests, unless a parent/guardian has contacted our schools to indicate a preference for their child(ren) not to receive those tests. If your child tests positive for COVID-19 during the Winter Recess, please contact your child's pediatrician and email your school's Principal and Assistant Principal.

Update on Mask Requirement for Schools: We continue to await an update from Governor Hochul on the status of the mask requirement for schools throughout our State, and we have noted media reports which indicate that the Governor intends to share further information on this topic by Friday, March 4. At the Board of Education meeting on Thursday of this week, the Board approved a resolution which "...calls on the Governor to provide clear, science-based metrics that will determine what level of COVID protocols continue to be required in NYS public schools." That resolution can be found [HERE](#).

Additionally, our district continues to make preparations for this likely transitional period for our students and staff members. Earlier this week, the district's Re-Entry Task Force came together to consider how we can work to ensure that all students and staff members feel respected for the choice that they may make in the future regarding whether or not to wear a mask. With the Winter Recess providing an opportunity for some of our families to engage in discussion about respecting the choices of others, below are two online resources which may be helpful in considering how to broach this topic with your child(ren).

[The great mask debate: how to deal with bullying over face masks in school - Boston Children's Answers \(childrenshospital.org\)](#)

[The Medical Minute: Unmasking strategies to help kids navigate views on masks | Penn State University \(psu.edu\)](#)

During the week after the Winter Recess, February 28 through March 4, our schools will be engaged in providing opportunities for students to hear about the importance of respect for all members of our school community, whether they may choose to wear a mask, or not to.

- At CET, Mrs. Bianchi and Mr. Campanaro will be visiting classrooms to have these conversations with students.
- At PVC, Mr. Plotkin and Ms. Scollins will be holding discussions with students, and the team will be working to create a PSA video on this topic as well.
- At CHHS, students will be watching a PSA video made by the building administrative team that discusses the potential change and reinforces our expectations about respecting one another and continued symptom monitoring.

Overall, our messaging to our students in all three schools will be that we have navigated through this difficult time period as a school community through respect for one another, and that we have the opportunity to continue to demonstrate our care for each other as we prepare for this anticipated transition related to mask wearing.

Through the approaches shared above, as well as through continued monitoring of our schools' positive case counts and regular consultation with our Medical Director, we will be prepared for any new information that the Governor shares early in March, and will move forward as we always have, together as a school district community.

We will continue to share information and updates with you on this and other topics in the near future. In the meantime, I wish you a restful and happy Winter Recess!

With Great Tiger Pride,

Stephen Walker