



Rochelle Park School District

300 Rochelle Avenue • Rochelle Park, NJ 07662 • 201-843-3120 • www.rochellepark.org

Dr. Sue DeNobile
SUPERINTENDENT
sdenobile@rochellepark.org

Mrs. Cheryl Jiosi
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
BOARD SECRETARY
cjiosi@rochellepark.org

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Dear Midland School Community,

This letter is written to provide you with a mid-year update on the district as we continue to navigate the educational landscape nearly one year into the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this communication, information about the status of the damage to Midland School resulting from flooding is also being shared.

On the morning of Friday, January 29, 2021, staff entered the building and found the first floor was flooded. A 2 inch diameter water pipe, with pressure at 100 PSI, had broken in the sprinkler room early in the morning. Rochelle Park's Fire Department, Department of Public Works, Office of Emergency Management, Police Department, and Bergen County Haz Mat all played critical roles in responding to this disaster. All students and staff quickly pivoted to implement a day of online learning. Everyone's cooperation provided for a rapid response that mitigated further repercussions. Nonetheless, the extent of damage to Midland School is extensive. The water damage has not yet been fully realized but thus far the impact includes:

- Flooring tiles and carpet in most classrooms and offices
- All flooring in the cafeteria, and the kitchen grease traps were flooded resulting in spillage
- Wall sheetrock in most classrooms and office spaces that had to be cut away
- Electrical damage to panels, circuit breakers, and transformers
- Elevator is not in service as the water flooded the elevator shaft and there was a leak of hydraulic fluid
- Classroom and office supplies, furniture, and educational materials
- Custodial supplies, including newly purchased electrostatic sprayer for disinfecting
- The isolation room, required by State mandate for COVID-19, is also damaged and not functional

To give you a sense of the condition of the building, some pictures are at the end of this correspondence. Immediate efforts to mitigate the damage and commence restoration took place quickly on Friday. The insurance and restoration companies are being most responsive and attentive. The assessment of damage continues. As communicated to you on 1/29/21, restoration could take up to 30 days. It is our goal to have the building repaired as quickly as possible. Once students can be brought back in they surely will be.

While this adds another stressor to an already difficult time, it is important to consider how fortunate we are. We are most thankful that nobody was injured, no students or staff were present, and the duration of the event did not go longer and cause even more damage. Again, we

are also thankful for the immediate response provided by Rochelle Park's Fire Department, DPW, OEM, and Police, and Bergen County's Haz Mat workers. This truly was an event where a community came together!

We are thankful for all of this, and more. As odd as it may seem, we are thankful for having the option to implement a full remote learning program during this time. Prior to COVID-19 this option was not available by the New Jersey Department of Education. If it were not for this option we could possibly be facing an adjustment in the school calendar that would impact upcoming breaks and a later close to the school year.

Later in the day on Friday, 1/29/21, a positive COVID-19 case was received. Those identified as possible primary contacts were contacted earlier in the day, and a general notice to all school community members was released that evening. This case resulted in the identification of thirty-five primary contacts. Had the school not already been on a remote learning platform due to the flood, a remote learning platform would have been activated due to COVID-19. At this mid-year point Midland School has had a total of 19 reported positive COVID-19 cases, and 121 possible primary contacts identified through line tracing. The chart below provides you with a month by month reference.

Month	Total # Reported Positive COVID-19 Cases	Total # Possible Primary Contacts
October	1	22
November	5	59
December	5	2
January	8	38
Total	19	121

To date, approximately 55% of the students are receiving instruction remotely due to parental requests, as permitted by the New Jersey Department of Education. For those who have chosen to have their child attend on-site classroom instruction, the students have been following health and safety practices, and the administration and staff have remained consistent with following health and safety guidelines as required by the New Jersey Department of Health.

Marking Period 3 started on Monday, February 1, 2021. We are halfway through the school year. Thank you to all who have been steadfast in teaming up with the district so we may continue our efforts to provide instruction. The staff has shown a tremendous amount of effort and commitment to implement e-learning tools and resources, students have been attending classes and putting forth their best effort, and parents have been partnering in this process; everyone's efforts are noticed, valued, and appreciated.

Through all of this it is the students that remain our primary focus. A recent post on social-media reads, "In case you need to hear it: Students are not falling behind. They are surviving a pandemic. Educators are not behind. You are also surviving a pandemic. Thank you for every ounce you give." This is a rather poignant post. Never, ever in the history of our education could we imagine this experience, not at its onset and most certainly not for this

duration. So, we find ourselves needing to persevere, continue our teamwork, support each other, and be thankful for each day.

The district calendar has three inclement weather/emergency closing days built in. To date, the district has used two inclement weather closings. The snowstorm that came our way Sunday, January 31st into Monday, February 1st was intense! Let's hope Mother Nature takes a step back now.

If you are interested in maintaining awareness of COVID-19 cases in your community, visit <https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/health-promotion/2019-novel-corona-virus> . This is Bergen County's website for COVID-19 information, including a town by town map of case counts. A number of other resources and links are available on this site too, from safety guidance and a symptom checker to vaccine information and resources for emotional support.

If you or someone you know is in need of support, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the school district. From the teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians, and secretaries, to the guidance counselor, school nurse, and administration, we all want the best for the students and our Midland School families.

Before you turn to pictures of the building's damage, please pay extra attention to the Midland School bulletin board pictures. The students' "Resilient" acrostics, and their reflections on "What is Your Superpower?" are most noteworthy. May we all be able to draw inspiration and learn from our students!

Stay safe, warm, and be well.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sue DeNobile, Superintendent





