

JUNE 2020 Spotlight

Mark your calendars for the following dates:

- ✓ Monday, June 15th – Virtual BOE meeting – 7:00 PM
- ✓ Friday, June 19th – Virtual Graduation – 7:00 PM



Confronting Racism

U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts stated, “Systemic injustice requires systemic solutions.” Over the past week, headlines have depicted the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and the societal reaction to the racial bias that exists in our country. Both peaceful protests and violent protests have highlighted racial injustices. In a Los Angeles Times, Op Ed, Presidential Medal of Freedom award winner Kareem Abdul-Jabbar stated, “Racism in America is like dust in the air. It seems invisible – even if you’re choking on it – until you let the sun in. Then you see it’s everywhere. As long as we keep shining that light, we have a chance of cleaning it wherever it lands. But we have to stay vigilant, because it’s always still in the air.”

As we know, Little Silver has little diversity. Prior to George Floyd’s murder, this community was largely focused on the impact of COVID-19. I’ve verbally noted during the past two Board of Education meetings, that our school district has not had to address some of the issues faced by other school districts. COVID-19 has had a disproportionately negative impact on communities of color. Our students were not recipients of food delivery because their family income qualified them for free or reduced priced meals. We don’t have a homeless population. No one was denied access to a computer. All households have WIFI. The list goes on.

Our country is filled with systemic inequalities. As a society we are faced with bias (conscious and unconscious bias), racism, economic inequities (privileged versus disadvantaged), and prejudice. This has been illustrated every time we’ve watched the news over the past week.

As a school system, we are committed to dismantling structures of systemic racism. We are committed to educating our students’ hearts and minds. Confronting racism is not a political issue. Confronting racism is a moral and ethical obligation. Social justice issues must be discussed in school AND at home. As a school district, issues of social justice are embedded into our curriculum. That said, we are taking a reflective approach to determining what more we can do. In a community that lacks diversity, it is important for our students to *experience social justice action*, and not simply observe it from the sidelines. While social justice issues are embedded throughout our curriculum, during these final weeks of school, I am asking teachers to shine a light on this issue.

This may be a difficult time for parents as you seek ways to speak with your own children. Therefore, we have provided resources for parents. [Resources for Traumatic Events and Racism](#) can be accessed two ways: through the Parent Quicklink and under the main Parent Tab on the menu bar on the district's homepage. We hope you will take advantage of these resources.

Our school district will continue to strive to become a better version of itself. Please continue to hold one another in your hearts and minds. Compassion, advocacy, and accountability must carry us forward.



The NJDOE Requests Parent Input on School Reopening

Please see the letter below from the New Jersey Department of Education

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your heroic efforts to support your children's schools and the learning process during closings due to the coronavirus pandemic. The New Jersey Department of Education (Department) continues preparations for the next stages of school opening, and hearing from parents is a Department priority. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey at the following link: NJDOE parent survey <https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/V8HZ2MQ>. We appreciate receiving your responses by **Monday, June 8th**.

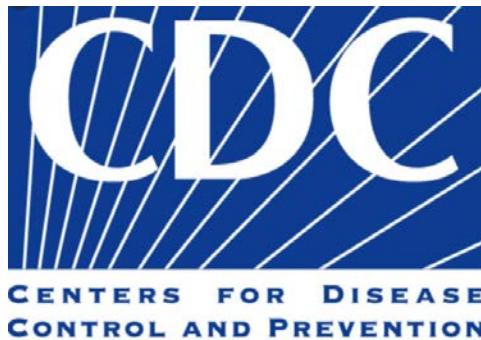
If you have any questions, please contact the Department's Office of Civic and Social Engagement at civicandsocial@doe.nj.gov.



Extended School Year Program

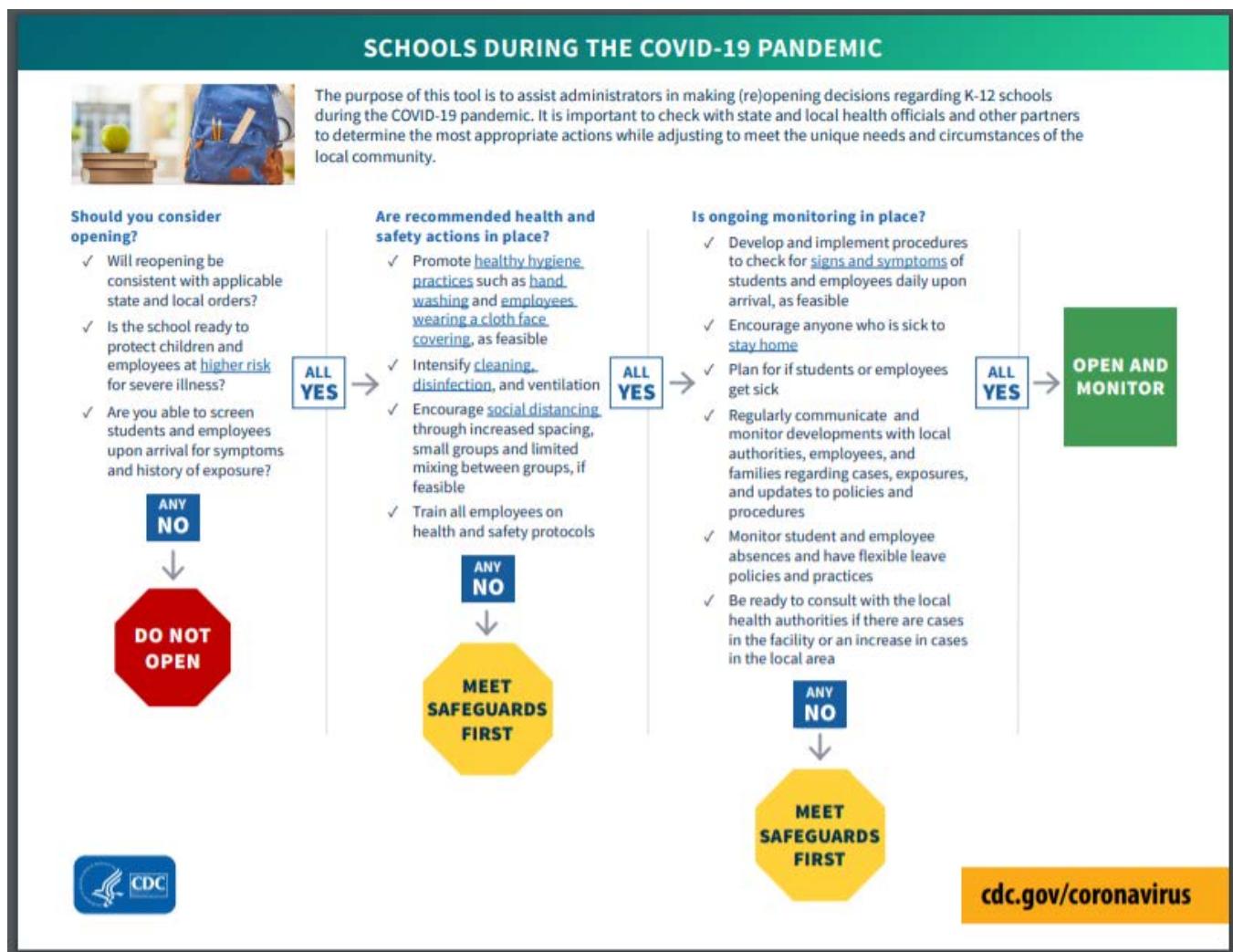
We have awaited direction from the NJDOE regarding guidance for Extended School Year (ESY) programming for special needs students. In the absence of receiving State Guidance, counties have had to make decisions. Monmouth County State representatives have advised that Monmouth County School Districts should plan for a remote ESY model. As school officials, it is our fundamental duty to provide a safe environment for staff and students. There are a plethora of unknown issues facing

school districts in terms of a September opening no less a summer program. Therefore, as school officials, we must err on the side of safety for all.



CDC Guidance Regarding School Re-Opening

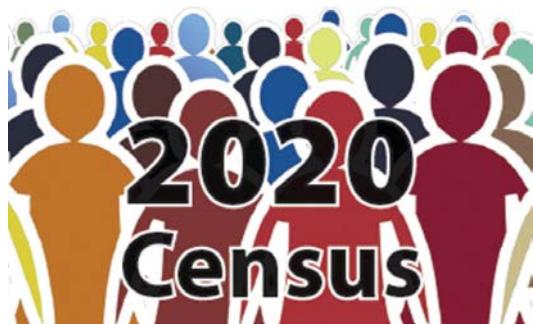
The CDC released a [tool](#) for administrators in making re-opening decisions. Each aspect of the plan reflects safety and security measures.





New Jersey Department of Education – Guiding the Education Community through the COVID-19 Epidemic

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) just released new resources to support the emotional well-being of students during COVID-19. The [resources](#) include a plethora of information ranging from talking to children about COVID-19, to delineating age appropriate resources for young students through high school age students.



LAST CALL to complete the Census 2020

The 2020 Census counts every person living in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for our communities. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

To learn more, click [2020 Census](#).

A Final Farewell

In January, I informed the Little Silver Community of my retirement effective June 30, 2020. Having spent 13 years of my career here, it was with appreciation and a heavy heart that I reached this important life decision. It is now five months later, and with my final days upon me, I want to once again reiterate my thanks.

First, it is with sincere gratitude that I thank the members of the Little Silver Board of Education with whom I've worked over the course of my tenure in the district. As community volunteers, they devote many hours to ensuring that we maintain a stellar school district. They afforded me the opportunity to facilitate three strategic plans during my time here that enabled us, as a school community, to set the vision for an extraordinary educational journey. Little Silver continuously receives accolades for educational programming and high levels of student achievement. Our district pride is grounded in a

plethora of accomplishments which would not have been realized without Board and community support.

Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality. As I've noted in the past, I have been extremely fortunate to work with an exceptional group of administrators who have never allowed obstacles to stifle progress toward our district vision. They work tirelessly to support the teachers and students of Little Silver. I am proud to call them my teammates. Their collective work is exceptional, and is realized by the positive impact on our students.

Learning does not occur in a void of relationships. The teachers of Little Silver have a keen understanding of the importance of developing significant relationships with the students and parents they serve. Their dedication to the district and the children of Little Silver is second to none. When faced with the extraordinary challenges of COVID-19, they rose to the occasion. I've never known a collective faculty who devotes an extraordinary amount of time outside of the school day to support student growth and development. Our teachers' passion for creating a culture that meets the needs of all students is beyond commendable. It has been a privilege to work alongside them.

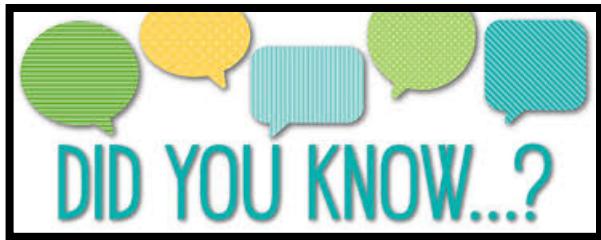
I would like to thank the support staff of Little Silver once again. Our Instructional Assistants continuously demonstrate a dedication to the children they serve. They are kind, supportive individuals, and we are fortunate to have them. Our office personnel create welcoming environments for staff, students and community even when they are juggling multiple balls in the air at one time. Our technology department, a subset of two, manages the work of many and they continuously do so with a smile. Their dedication and integrity was highlighted during this pandemic as they supported staff and students in a remote learning environment. They are AMAZING! Our lunch personnel from *Simplified Culinary* are part of our family and have created a lunch program like no other. They baked chocolate chip cookies for every 8th grade graduate! Their thoughtfulness defines the essence of being kind. Lastly, our maintenance staff and custodial department cannot be overlooked. They take pride in our physical facilities, ensuring that the environment is fit for the staff and children of Little Silver. While most staff has worked from home over recent months, they have reported to work daily, ensuring that buildings are sanitized and ready when schools can once again reopen.

Our district is blessed to have *many* educational, community, service organizations, local government agencies, businesses and individuals who work in partnership with our district and schools. The Little Silver PTO and the Education Foundation of Little Silver work tirelessly in their fundraising efforts to support district programs and resources. The Town Council, Mayor Neff, and the Little Silver Police Department have worked in partnership with the school district in good times and bad. Together we weathered the challenges of difficult times and celebrated the achievements of our students. I thank all of our educational partners for their dedication to our school community. You have clearly demonstrated that an engaged community, who works together for the betterment of the district, is a powerful force!

I would like to extend a special thanks to our families for entrusting me with your children. When one holds a position that requires much decision-making, it is impossible to ensure the outcomes will please everyone. That has recently been evident. However, as I've maneuvered through a litany of issues over the past 13 years, you have challenged my thinking, provided thoughtful alternatives to difficult problems, and most importantly, provided me the great responsibility to enable your children the opportunity to reach their full potential.

We often say that teaching is a calling. As teachers, we enter into education because of the students. Therefore, I want to thank the children of Little Silver. I am continually inspired by your curiosity and talents. My visits to your classrooms are *always* the highlights of my day.

I welcome Mr. Ettore as he assumes his new role. I wish him every success as he begins a new chapter in Little Silver's history.



Did you know that the EFLS donated over \$122,000 to the Little Silver School District to fulfill technology grant requests? In a year when there event was cancelled due to COVID-19, this was truly extraordinary! THANK YOU for all of your hard work.