



WYCKOFF SCHOOL DISTRICT

ONE COMMUNITY. ONE VISION. ONE STUDENT AT A TIME.

Date: June 5, 2020
Memo to: Wyckoff Families
From: Jeffrey Feifer, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent
Grace White, Assistant Superintendent

We hope all is well with you and your families. While we are saddened by the events unfolding before our eyes, we want to assure you that we are committed to a robust and comprehensive educational program that enhances self-esteem, optimizes each child's potential, develops a life-long love of learning, builds personal responsibility and fosters respect of others. Wyckoff families, teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors partner to help children develop open-mindedness, understanding of different perspectives, and empathy. Talking with students about these issues is critical. Reading books with children is one way to start and continue to have conversations. Books can provide opportunities for your child to see themselves and develop their understanding of others. Please use this link to view a [list of books and resources](#) that we have put together for you.

Our district is unwavering in its commitment to further our teaching about citizenship, social justice, racism, and inequality work through an already comprehensive curriculum and ongoing professional development. This summer, our curriculum will be revised to reflect newly adopted [NJDOE New Jersey Student Learning Standards \(NJSLs\)](#) that consider multiple perspectives, value diversity, and promote cultural understanding. New Jersey's Commissioner of Education, Lamont O. Repollet, shares these words of support for our work in Wyckoff, *"I encourage you to take the standards we set, infuse the concepts of care, citizenship and change-making into classroom instruction, and help students understand they truly can be the change we seek. As educators, we are committed to continuing our anti-racist work through professional development, independent research and practice."*

Tomorrow, June 6, we observe the 76th Anniversary of D-Day. We remember and honor the sacrifices of the Allied Forces who liberated Western Europe from Nazi Germany. During these difficult times, we also need to remember that, for this operation to be successful, military leaders had to overcome political, cultural, and personal differences. Also, the mission required cooperation among an international coalition of troops from America, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Holland, France, Greece, New Zealand, Norway, Rhodesia, and Poland.

The Bergen County Association of School Administrators has issued a statement that urges “all citizens to seek to find common ground, respect, and a belief in each other’s inherent worth.” Please click on the link [BCASA statement](#).

Eisenhower Grade 8 Celebration

Some parents have been asking why we chose to have a virtual promotion celebration for our eighth graders instead of an in-person outdoor ceremony in July. The following letter from the FLOW (Franklin Lakes, Oakland, and Wyckoff) Superintendents explains our reasoning.

Dear Families,

We have devoted countless hours analyzing the benefits and drawbacks of both a virtual celebration and an outdoor celebration. This process included conversations with administrative colleagues in Bergen County, staff members, board members, and parent/community groups. We collectively believe that the numerous restrictions directed to districts (some of which we are sharing below) are not in the best interest of the safety/wellness for our students and families alike. The state requirements that impacted our decision include the following:

- *“Ceremony capacity limitation is dependent upon the number of participants able to attend while keeping 6 feet distance between attendees.” Currently, the Governor’s Executive Order limit is 25, and we do not know what it might be in July. (Wyckoff has 231 students in grade 8. Even if we limited students to two tickets, this would result in a crowd size of more than 700 people.)*
- *“The event must keep participants socially distanced (6 feet) while walking, standing, or sitting, and masks must be worn, except for limited exemptions.”*
- *“Signage should be posted discouraging anyone who is sick or anyone who has been in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days from attending.”*
- *“Monitors at entrances and egresses should disperse crowding.” (Eisenhower grounds allow access at many different points.)*
- *“Temperature screenings with non-contact thermometers of everyone entering the venue is recommended. Where such screenings are conducted, any person with a temperature of 100.4 °F or greater should be excluded from the event.”*

- *“If allowing access to restrooms, appropriate measures must be taken to prevent congregating such as marking standing locations for lines and assigning staff to monitor distancing.”*
- *“School Districts should consult their insurance companies in planning any in-person graduation ceremonies.” We have been advised that all Insurance liability policies contain a virus contamination exclusion, and therefore it would be inadvisable from an insurance perspective to conduct such a ceremony.*

Please understand that our commitment to the well-being of our students, staff, and community members is a primary responsibility. A virtual celebration negates the health and safety concerns addressed in the guidelines. Further, we are concerned that the temperature and humidity levels can be extremely high in July, and many staff members who usually assist with the promotion exercises are not under contract during the summer or will be out of the area on vacation.

This is an exceptional time for our eighth-grade students, and we are doing all we can to make sure that they are recognized in a memorable way. While our virtual graduations may be different than in years past, we are confident that we will appropriately celebrate each student – and do so in the safest manner possible.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gayle Strauss, Franklin Lakes

Dr. Gina Coffaro, Oakland

Dr. Jeffrey Feifer, Wyckoff

Wyckoff Schools Summer Academies

The [Wyckoff Summer Academies](#) will offer students a unique virtual experience this summer. Please look at our innovative course offerings, including Math and Language Arts offerings. Registration is now open. Please continue to revisit the [Wyckoff School District homepage](#), where you will find continually updated information.

Parent Survey

The New Jersey Department of Education requests parent feedback as it continues preparations for the next stages of school opening. Parents, please open this [memo](#) to participate in a survey related to the re-opening of schools. Your input is essential.

Communications

Please note that we have been sending out our “Memo to Wycoff Families” and our “Letters to Staff” on Friday afternoons. In these communications, we include any information that we get from the County or State that we are asked to share (as is the case with the Parent Survey referenced above). Sometimes this information has already been sent to the news media and/or social media, and you may learn about these items before you receive them from us. Please understand that we are trying to communicate as efficiently as possible. Therefore, there may be a couple of days between when you get information from another source and when you hear from us on Friday. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Have a safe and healthy weekend.