

**From:** Michael Fetherman <mfetherman@mlschools.org>  
**Subject:** 2021-22 Safe Reopening Plan & Community Feedback  
**Date:** June 16, 2021

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Dear Mountain Lakes Parent/Guardian,

For the upcoming 2021-2022 school year, all New Jersey public school districts are required to complete a "Safe Return to School Plan" and submit it to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) by June 24, 2021.

The Mountain Lakes School District created a plan last summer, the "[Restart and Recovery Plan to Reopen Schools](#)," where the district designed school schedules and enacted other procedures that kept our students, staff, and schools safe during the pandemic. Throughout the school year, the school district continued to make adjustments as certain COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, such as the shift from six feet to three feet of physical distancing between students thereby eliminating student cohorts at both Briarcliff and the high school.

The Mountain Lakes School District will operate full days of in-person learning, including lunch, beginning September 2021. The NJ Department of Education is requiring school districts to submit a Safe Return to School Plan as part of the district Restart and Recovery Plan to Reopen Schools for the 2021-22 school year. Our district's reopening plan for the 2021-22 school year can be viewed [here](#).

The "Safe Return to School Plan" template requires that the district complete the following sections:

1. Maintaining Health and Safety of Staff and Students
2. Ensuring Continuity of Services
3. Public Comments

For the 2021-22 School Year, the Mountain Lakes School District will:

1) Maintain health and safety for everyone by continuing to follow the guidelines provided by the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). We will continue to require our school staff, students, and visitors to wear face masks while on school grounds unless otherwise guided by Governor Executive Order and/or NJDOH guidance/recommendations. When and where necessary, the district will continue to maintain physical distance and arrange desks in a manner whereby each student will be at least three feet away when sitting in their seats. Staff will maintain at least six feet of physical distance between themselves and students. The schools will continue to emphasize the importance of handwashing and maintaining clean facilities. Our school nurses will continue to follow the procedures determined by the CDC and NJDOH for contact tracing. The district will continue to provide appropriate accommodations for our students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies. Finally, we will be providing lunch to all of our students at each elementary, middle, and high school while adhering to the CDC and NJDOH guidelines.

2) Provide continuity of services in order to support staff and student social-emotional needs while ensuring access to mental health supports. These services consist of partnerships with providers and district specialists who will deliver direct and indirect services for students and

staff. These enhancements will be in addition to the existing partnerships with outside mental health specialists to support student referrals. The district will also include staff professional development and specialized certification programs for school-based mental health specialists.

3) Seek public comments by welcoming their thoughts and insights as we move forward and plan for the upcoming 2021-22 school year. Members of the Mountain Lakes School Community are encouraged to share their thoughts on this [google form](#). Please share your thoughts by Monday, June 21st.

The district thanks you for your support and hopes that you enjoy the rest of the school year. Please have a wonderful summer, spend quality time with family and friends, and we will see you next September!

Sincerely,

Michael J. Fetherman

Superintendent of Schools