

Re-Entry Plan Amendment

Please be advised that the Environment Community Opportunity (ECO) Charter School is hereby amending its most recent Pandemic Response and School Re-Entry Plan. Beginning on November 12, 2020, ECO Charter School will transition the Blended Learning Hybrid Program to a School-wide Virtual Program until the Pandemic Response and School Re-Entry Taskforce convenes and briefs the Board of Trustees. Trustees will review pertinent data regarding COVID-19 transmission levels and consider next steps at the regularly-scheduled meeting on January 25, 2021. At the meeting, the Board, will vote to ratify plans (made in conjunction with the Taskforce, ECO Charter School leaders, the Camden County Department of Health and the Office of the NJ Department of Education Camden County Executive Superintendent) to either revert to and resume operations according to the originally revised plan or the Board will make a different determination according to the factors identified that dictate whether it is safe to resume in-person instruction.

The rationale for this decision is simple; we are taking a proactive stance to protect our community; the factors that have influenced this decision are as follows:

1. COVID-19 cases are on the rise across our country and are at levels that exceed conditions experienced in March 2020 when schools transition to virtual instruction per an executive order from Governor Phil Murphy. Today, November 11, 2020, there are 14,402 COVID cases in Camden County. Our school has experienced four confirmed positive COVID cases within the past two weeks; the small size of our school and nature of teacher assignments make community spread a serious and present threat to the health and safety of our community.
2. Our school has experienced significant increases of employee illnesses. Additionally, paid time off requests for the coming weeks have soared along with parental requests for student work tasks. Families are planning to travel to states that are listed as impacted states on the NJ Travel Advisory List. This is a considerable concern as we anticipate many families may neglect to disclose similar plans to travel to impacted states – we cannot trust that all stakeholders will disclose travel and quarantine as required. Due to our small size, we cannot effectively conduct the in-person Blended Learning Hybrid Program if faculty members are required to quarantine.
3. Threats to the integrity of the in-person instructional program are substantial. Employees are experiencing emotional distress and are beginning to be impacted by home responsibilities such as caring for quarantined partners, siblings, parents, and children. Moreover, families are becoming more and more reluctant to send their children to school in-person based on the increase of local COVID cases. Coverage for in-person instruction is becoming increasingly difficult to manage given our small employee corps. Too, substitute service providers are overwrought with requests and even if we were to secure services, having outside entities enter our buildings presents additional risks.

Should you have questions about this or require additional information regarding this decision, please contact me at 856.963.2627.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Antoinette C. Dendtler, Founder & Head of School/Lead Person