



Superintendent's Report September 8, 2022

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! We welcomed faculty and staff back on September 1 and 2, 2022, and welcomed our students on Tuesday, September 6, 2022. As COVID-19 loosens its grip on us all, we have been able to return to school this year by taking a few more steps toward normalcy – and our first days have been great.

I want to extend a colossal thank you to everyone who worked so diligently over the summer to prepare for opening school. I especially thank our secretaries, business office staff, custodians and maintenance staff for all of their efforts. Thank you to our administrators for their tireless efforts in planning the opening of school. Our teachers did an outstanding job in making their classrooms a welcoming place and for planning lessons for our students' first days. It has been awesome hearing from students, parents, teachers and staff on how well the first days have been going. I know it is going to be a great year!

Thank you also to the PTO who provided a wonderful first day breakfast for our faculty, staff and administrators on September 1, 2022. We appreciate your hard work in arranging this and your welcoming hospitality on the first day of the new school year!

The summer was a busy time here in Closter Public Schools. As we start this new year, I want to acknowledge some of the great things that took place over the summer:

- 148 students attended our summer programs in literacy, mathematics, STEM, and art and 19 students attended extended school year programs in special education. Congratulations to these 167 students who continued learning over the summer and thank you to the teachers who worked with them.
- We offered professional development in literacy and mathematics instruction for 31 teachers. The sessions offered practical instructional strategies for teachers to use with students. The feedback from teachers was extremely positive and they are excited to implement what they learned.
- We also offered sessions for teachers to work on unit planning for the school year and 40 teachers worked on units in social studies, computer science/STEM, Physical Education/Health, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, mental wellness, English as a Second Language and Writing. I am excited about the work the teachers have accomplished during this summer time planning.
- The maintenance and custodian staff worked to clean all classrooms and also enhanced our facilities, including painting the exterior of both schools, refinishing the stage and gym floor at Hillside School, updating classrooms with new student and teacher desks, replacing the ceiling tiles and lighting in the Tenakill Middle School lobby, installing a volleyball court and nine-square-in-the-air play at Tenakill Middle School, and resurfacing/repainting parking lots. They will be installing new electronic sign-boards at both schools in the coming weeks so we can keep the community updated with school

information and events. Kudos to Ralph Chappell and his team on their outstanding work!

Back to School Nights will be held in the coming weeks. Principals will send the specific schedules, but please note the dates:

- Grades PreK-1: Tuesday, September 21, 2022
- Grades 2 – 4: Wednesday, September 14, 2022
- Grade 5 – 6: Tuesday, September 13, 2022
- Grades 7 – 8: Thursday, September 15, 2022

Once again, the Safe Return to School Plan is posted on our district website. Here is a quick overview of our health and safety procedures for this year:

- Masks are optional for staff and students.
- Physical distancing is no longer required.
- Quarantine is no longer required for anyone exposed to COVID-19. We do recommend wearing a mask after exposure and getting tested after day 5, but it is not required. The school nurse will notify parents when someone in a classroom does test positive.
- Those who test positive for COVID-19 must stay home for at least five days. Isolation may end after day five if the person is fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) and when symptoms improve. After ending isolation, the person must wear a mask for days 6-10.
- We will continue to have COVID-19 testing on Tuesdays, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Hillside School upper parking lot.
- If you have any questions about the protocols, please call your school nurse or school principal.

I love the start of the school year, with all of its excitement, opportunity and possibilities for great things. I wish everyone all the best as we begin the 2022-2023 school year.

Vincent Mc Hale