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To the Matheny School Community:

Normally we would be celebrating our Class of 2020 graduates this week; however, that celebration is on hold until the Department of Health allows our parents and families celebrate together. Yesterday, the state Department of Education issued guidance on how we may consider coming back together in the Fall – the administration, teachers, guidance counselors, custodians, and maintenance personnel have already begun preparations for this September. While we know that our school shall operate virtually this summer, there are still some things we do not know.

Although there are a lot of uncertainties, what we do know is that we want our schools to be open. We want students to be learning alongside their friends. We want teachers and therapists to be in their classrooms. We want musicians and artists on our stages. We want our schools to be open.

We also know that we want all of the members of our learning community to be safe. We want to employ best practices. We want to take our cues from the New Jersey Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control, and the New Jersey Department of Education. We want to make decisions that prioritize both physical and mental health, student learning, teacher preparation, and the breadth of our technology and facility capabilities.

But we also know that no matter what we want, or what we design, we will need to be nimble. It is highly unlikely that we will start or complete the 2020-2021 school year without issue - COVID-19 has not disappeared.

As such, we are currently designing health and learning plans for three scenarios. The first two scenarios are rather familiar -- everybody in, everybody out. The third scenario is new. This would involve a partial or limited enrollment opening of our campuses. This is the scenario that would reduce class sizes, establish weekly (or daily) cohorts, reduce transportation loads, and create a hybrid in-person/remote learning environment.

One big takeaway from the state guidelines for the reopening of schools in New Jersey is the input from and communication with community stakeholders. Please look for a survey to be sent out within the next two weeks. In the meantime, we want to thank all of you for your patience and support.

Sincerely,

Kendell R. Sprott, M.D., J.D.  
Executive Director, The Matheny School

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Principal, The Matheny School