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September 1, 2021

Dear Parents, Staff, CST Case Managers, DCF workers, and CASA workers:

As we start the new school year, we have to inform you that we have not met our goal to reopen five days per week in the fall. We may not reach our goal of full-time in-person instruction and therapies until January 2022. Our Long-Range Facility Plan (LRFP) will be submitted on September 2nd. This, along with safe staffing levels, will allow us to move into our hybrid schedule as soon as possible.

We will begin the school year virtually - classes will be offered from 10:00 am -12:10 pm and between 1:30 - 3:35 pm. Therefore, IEPs and behavioral meetings will only be scheduled between 12:15 - 1:30 pm. Therapists and teachers are working together to schedule therapies and instructional programs with minimal disruptions. As you know, the virtual environment can be challenging but there is good news. We have upgraded all of our technology - we have procured new laptops, secured Google Suite for Educators, Apple School, professional Zoom accounts, and Jamf.

Unfortunately, most schools in New Jersey are dealing with high staff shortages with some places at more than 50% vacancy rates. Due to the complex issues faced by our students, we must ensure that we hire the right people who are the best fit for our environment. We have taken steps to increase staffing by improving our compensation packages, offering sign-on bonuses, and increasing outreach and advertising. Given the onboarding process which includes extensive training, we are hopeful that we could return to a hybrid schedule as early as October.

We continue to pivot with each new change from the Department of Health and the Department of Education. We are tracking all variants of the COVID-19 virus and working with our partners in the hospital as we pursue our shared mission of "providing as many IEP services as practicable as safely as possible." We know this is difficult for everyone and we appreciate your faith in us. If anyone has any questions, please email: mathenyschool@matheny.org.

Sincerely,

Bill Kent, MHA
President/CEO/Executive Director

Sean Murphy
Vice President of Education/Principal/Director