



West Orange Public Schools
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Superintendent of Schools

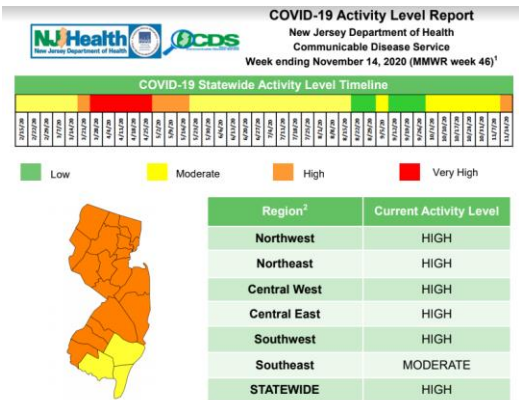
J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.

Dear West Orange Public School Families,

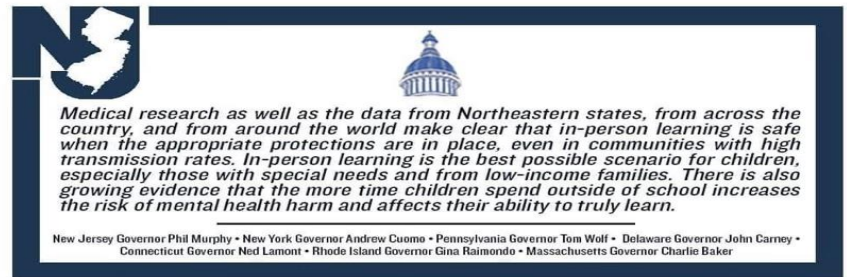
November 20, 2020

As I have previously provided advisories concerning the elevating levels and positivity rates, please find this week's update concerning COVID-19 both locally and county wide. In consultation with the West Orange Department of Health and the Office of Emergency Management, it has been reported that over the last 7 days the positivity rate is now at 15% for West Orange and at 12% for Essex County.

I have captioned the most recent COVID-19 risk matrix designations below (*Table 1*). You will notice that the majority of cities or regions are at the high level of risk, West Orange is noted in the high level of risk range as well.



(Table 1)



Governors' Post

I'd also like to address a social media post disseminated from the Governor's office yesterday (*Governors' post above*). The range and variance in local risk levels lend a certain degree of credence to Governor Murphy's decision not to close all schools. However, there is an inherent contradiction with this general decree and the guidelines which the New Jersey State Department of Health has issued which inform the school district's decision-making as to our mode of operation. Details relative to this information were provided last week in the [Metric Letter](#).

As we begin to make enhancements and augmentations to our virtual model, we will also continue to monitor local positivity rates and evaluate an appropriate time to commence our hybrid model and/or begin to increase smaller cohorts of students. That being said, when considering the local positivity rate, and the likelihood of an increased level of social interaction and interstate travel over the next 4 to 6 weeks, the virtual format remains the safest and therefore most prudent course of action at this time.

We remain extremely mindful of both the academic and social/emotional challenges which prolonged virtual learning presents for some of our students and families. I continue to work with the district's leadership team, student counseling department, and teaching staff to bring an even greater level of efficiency and effectiveness in the way in which we are leveraging our live instructional time, office hours and intervention sessions, and utilizing a more personalized and proactive approach to student and parent outreach.

I want to thank you for your time and consideration as well as your partnership and patience in working with the school district through these unprecedented and most challenging times. I wish you a restful and safe weekend.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.
 Superintendent of Schools