



HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

April 14, 2022

Dear Holmdel Public Schools Community,

I hope this finds you well as we come to this shortened week in advance of our spring recess. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our community members celebrating Passover and Easter all the best for blessed holidays and celebrations with your loved ones. I would remind the community that classes will resume for all students pre-K through 12 on Monday, April 25.

As we move into the warmer months and approach the end of the school year with its celebrations of moving up and graduation, I would ask our students to continue to exercise good judgment with regard to conduct whether while in school, driving, or social gatherings. I thank our parents and guardians in advance for reinforcing this message to our young folks to be smart and thoughtful. As we enter into this time of closure and celebration, let's do so in a manner which will continue to make our community and families proud.

Should you find that your child becomes ill over the holiday break, please feel free to contact your school nurse and provide an update. While you may not receive an immediate correspondence, they will check their email with some regularity. This information will help the nurse's office manage illness upon everyone's return from break. As always, your support with this endeavor is appreciated.

This week I had the opportunity to join the trustees of the Holmdel Foundation for Educational Excellence (HFEE) and am so impressed with the commitment and efforts of this outstanding parent organization. Through their work they continue to identify ways in which they can partner with the school district in advancing its educational mission. To that end, I have linked the flier and registration site for their upcoming [6th Annual HFEE 5K Run/Walk & Kids Fun Run - Saturday 6/18/22](#). Please join me in registering, coming out for a day of community and family fun, and raising money for our schools and children.

In closing, I felt obliged to provide our community with an update with regard to the forthcoming revision to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Health Education. I have appreciated the engagement from parents expressing their points of view and would like to reinforce a few core principles which will inform and guide our planning and thought process. First, the administration and the Board of Education are listening intently to the diverse voices of our community stakeholders. Later this spring, the date to be determined, the district administration will be holding a public forum through which the administration can clarify the salient changes in the health education standards, as well as receive questions and hear feedback from our stakeholders. Thirdly, the curriculum rewriting effort will take place this summer and will be undertaken in an inclusive and team approach with our staff and administration. Finalized curriculum will be shared with the community in advance of implementation.

We aspire to develop a curriculum which will be well received by our community. As there always has been, parents and guardians will of course, have the option to opt their child out of certain lessons and topics which they feel might be more appropriately taught within the home environment. Yesterday, the governor did indicate that he was charging the Department of Education to go back to work on the standards in order to clarify and provide explicit guidance to districts on what would be considered age-appropriate resources. Our district, of course, will utilize these resources as a frame of reference but ultimately will make decisions which are grounded in sound curriculum, child development, and pedagogical theory.

Certainly, we encourage our families to continue to reach out, share their perspective and give feedback. Doing so through civil discourse and the chain of command is greatly appreciated and is the most constructive approach. I'm hopeful that my forthrightness with regard to this topic will provide some reassurance to those members with the greatest concerns. I would implore community members to lean into grace and understanding with regard to any public messaging, as we remain mindful that these topics do relate personally to families and children residing in our local and regional communities. In our efforts to understand the changes and weighing with regard to our opinions, let us likewise send a message that all of our community members have a seat at the table and are embraced for who they are.

No thank you in advance for your time and consideration and wish you all the best for a restful break.I

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Scott Cascone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and "C".

Dr. J. Scott Cascone

Superintendent of Schools