

To: Link Families  
From: Maria Pilar Paradiso, head of school  
Re: Remote Instruction to Continue until January 28th  
Date: January 14, 2022

I am writing to share that Link Community Charter School will continue remote instruction through Friday, January 28<sup>th</sup> and return to in-person instruction on Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. This decision was made in consultation with the Newark Department of Health. I recognize this is a very challenging situation and hope that as you read you will understand how we arrived at this important decision.

Since the holidays, numbers of positive COVID-19 cases, COVID-19 hospitalizations, and related deaths in our area and statewide have been staggering. We also continue to hear from our staff and families about members of our own school community with positive cases and with symptoms, some very serious. And, we also have learned of some deaths. The situation for some is tragic and our hearts and prayers go out to our staff and families. As a result, we remain concerned about the impact on our community's health and wellbeing and about the impact on our ability to operate the school as necessary if we return too soon.

By delaying the return to in-person learning until Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, we can provide more time for the local conditions to ease a bit and the roll out of a school-based testing program. To that end, here are a few things, we will be doing to support a transition back to in-person instruction on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Your full participation will help us get back to the building as safely as possible:

1. Complete this survey to let us know the vaccination status of your Link scholar. This information will be needed to determine appropriate isolation periods under the latest guidance from the CDC and the NJ Department of Health.
2. Get your Link scholar tested at our school building on Monday, January 24<sup>th</sup> or Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, between 9 am and 2 pm. This will be a saliva-based PCR Test collected by a state vendor with a medical team. It takes just a few minutes to complete the test. And, this testing at Link will remain in place each week for the near future to help us gauge incidents of COVID-19 in our school community. By testing regularly and consistently, we will catch cases earlier. Look out for a separate email regarding registration for testing so that you can provide consent for your child to be tested on a weekly basis. You and the school nurse will have direct access to individual test results on a confidential portal. This weekly testing is for students and staff. **We strongly encourage you to provide consent so your child/ren can participate. This will be a strong step in fighting COVID if a high percentage of our school community tests every week.**
3. On January 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, ensure that your Link scholar is working independently on assigned work (asynchronously) to allow families and staff to go to school to get tested.
4. Consider vaccinating your Link scholars. Link is partnering with University Hospital to offer a virtual evening information session on Pediatric Vaccinations and with the Newark Department of Health to offer a Vaccination Clinic at Link. We are working with both organizations to schedule these as soon as possible.
5. Continue to reach out to the school nurse at [nurse@linkschool.org](mailto:nurse@linkschool.org) or call us at 973-642-0529 during school hours to share COVID cases in your family.
6. Support us in helping your child wear a mask correctly at all times when inside the school building. We will require a surgical mask or N95/KN95/KF94 mask be worn while in the building. The surgical mask can be worn either alone or on top of a cotton mask. And, we will provide an information session on masks.

Over the coming weeks, we will share more updates with you. Until then, please stay healthy and safe.