

Board of Education
PARSIPPANY-TROY HILLS TOWNSHIP
Morris County, New Jersey

Parsippany-Troy Hills Board of Education

Expresses Support for the Superintendent and Administration

The Board of Education wishes to express its support and appreciation for the hard work of the PTHSD Administration, specifically our Superintendent, Dr. Barbara Sargent. We understand that the PTHEA has taken a vote of “no confidence” relative to Dr. Sargent’s plan to return to school and we are saddened by the Union’s lack of positive leadership and productive cooperation at this time.

The Union’s history of miscommunication to their members, and their rush to condemn the hardworking individuals who have only held the best interest of the entire district community in their decisions, serves only to divide the district and fails to properly serve our students. A recent communication from the PTHEA leadership made a puerile reference to Dr. Sargent’s responses to their vague concerns as “insulting, ridiculous, uncreative, and unsafe.” As a Board, we have never known Dr. Sargent to be any of those, and her responses to public questions have always been appropriate, even if not appreciated. We invite the PTHEA leadership to stop inciting unrest and start acting like concerned community members who wish to be part of the solution in an educationally unprecedented time.

Much has been asked of all district Administrators over the past few months and Dr. Sargent has proven herself to be a leader who doesn’t shy away from hard decisions while taking into account the needs and wishes of the entire school community. Dr. Sargent has ensured that our students, families, staff and community members have received frequent, clear and comprehensive communication regarding the Department of Education’s requirements and the District’s plans for re-opening our schools despite ever-changing, and sometimes conflicting information from the State.

As is evident by the news in New Jersey and across the nation, there is no “good” answer to the current situation. Certainly, there is no decision regarding the re-opening that will please everyone. There are positives and negatives to any decision that has to be made. In NJ, the Department of Education published specific guidelines relative to the health and safety of students and staff that had to be met as school districts re-opened. Against that backdrop, and under Dr. Sargent’s leadership, teachers, support staff, parents and administrators helped develop building based plans to address those health and safety guidelines. All of their thoughts, ideas and concerns were heard.

There have been multiple public presentations on the plan for the Fall. While changes have been made along the way, this is a testament to Dr. Sargent’s ability to adapt to the changes at the state level, new information being published by the CDC and state health officials and the voiced concerns of our parents and staff. While not all questions have a clear answer, to the extent that answers have been available, they were communicated promptly. As in most difficult situations, every issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

Dr. Sargent and the rest of administration have worked very hard to ensure that the guidelines set by the State have been met while ensuring that each student has the opportunity to take advantage of the best possible educational experience that can be made available to them. The District’s plan has now been approved by the County Executive Superintendent as meeting all of the guidelines set forth in the Road Back.

Although there will certainly be further questions and concerns and while the District’s procedures, protocols and plan changes and adapts to each phase of the reopening process, there will be continued dialogue with all interested stakeholders. It is the Board’s hope that the Union will be a productive part of the conversation.