



**ESSEX REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION
COMMISSION SCHOOLS**

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Greetings ERESC Schools' Staff,

Welcome to the 2020-21 school-year! As we continue to navigate the current health crisis, we are well underway with planning for a beginning like no other we have seen in the past. Although we have addressed needs relative to teaching and learning as well as health and safety measures for staff and students, our central focus will still be to ensure that:

- Every student, every day feels **connected**;
- Every student, every day is being **challenged** by new learnings and experiences; and
- Every student, every day knows they have **committed staff** they can turn to.

Spring of 2020 has challenged staff and students to find a new normal for learning, connected us in new ways and required our committed staff to demonstrate their commitment from afar. What I have most learned through this process is how much I appreciate the expertise our principals and teachers bring to our schools, and the ways in which our students continue to work hard to grow. What I most appreciate about the ERESC Schools' community is how even under unprecedented circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are still a community of stakeholders dedicated to ensuring the academic and social/emotional well-being of our students.

Normal is such a simple word and it is our goal at ERESC to not only find our new normal, but to use this time as a learning experience that will forever impact the learning environments of all ERESC schools. Beginning September 10, 2020, the new school year for ERESC students enrolled at Essex Junior Academy, Essex Campus Academy, Essex High School, and Sojourn High School will commence with full remote learning. The details of our three-phase re-opening plan are as follows:

- **Phase 1:** All staff and students will engage in full remote learning from **September 10, 2020 to October 2, 2020**;
- **Phase 2:** Remote learning will continue for students between **October 5, 2020 and October 30, 2020**. If supported by the information from the CDC, NJ Health Department, Governor's Office and ERESC leadership, teachers will be required to report onsite to provide remote instruction within their designated classroom spaces; and
- **Phase 3:** Between **November 2, 2020 and November 30, 2020** all ERESC alternative schools will implement an in-person hybrid model. This model will combine in-person learning with remote engagement for student cohorts.

For the 2020-2021 school-year, our school day will begin online at 8:20 am. A new bell schedule that defines time periods devoted to each subject/class will be followed both in-person and during remote learning. Students will be expected to sign-in to begin classes under the direction of his/her homeroom teacher. Students' coursework at non-resident schools will be completed on

Edgenuity, a K-12 online curriculum platform which offers e-learning courses aligned with New Jersey learning standards and course content required for graduation. The approach is being changed to provide a system that allows for more personalized learning plans. Professional development sessions will be provided in September for EJA and ECA/EHS teaching staff members. Information regarding the scheduled training sessions will be provided under separate cover.

Each month, the ERESC's leadership will review available information related to the health crisis in order to determine if transition from one phase to another is recommended. Updates on all decisions will be shared with staff and families via letter, telephone notifications and website updates. Although we recognize that our fall may not be "normal," we are committed to ensuring that our learning will not only continue, but it will thrive.

This year, as in the past, we must concentrate on the processes that spur continuing advancement: evaluating what we have, determining what we can do to improve, and identifying what we need to make those improvements. If this is done, we will certainly begin our movement towards transformation of our schools.

Yours in education,

Kevin E. Guyton

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Assistant Superintendent of Schools