

## PANDEMIC RESPONSE TEAM UPDATE

We are very grateful to all who completed the poll to provide us with data to drive our next steps. We have been working hard to provide a more complete picture of what Phase II will look like. The poll is included in this eNews and this is the very last call to have your voice heard.

### Background on Phase II

The Pandemic Response Team has done extensive research and garnered important information from multiple sources to assist in the development of SVMS Phase II. The common concern that came up from our teachers and staff, and was reiterated at area schools, is that lunch is problematic under current COVID conditions. It is a 20 minute period where all children are in a classroom without masks. Right now, our students are more than six feet apart with desk shields when they remove their masks for lunch. We will not be able to continue this practice with approximately 20 maskless students approximately 3 feet apart. It would not be safe, even with desk shields.

When we move closer to making Phase II happen, please note the following:

- 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be divided into three sections with the possibility of other grade levels also having three sections. Each section will receive some in-person instruction and some live-streaming at school on a daily basis.
- The increase of students in Phase II will result in some teachers having to teach from home.

It is important to emphasize that Phase II is not an end of game. It is a stepping stone towards Phase III, which would be all in, all day with PPE, using the school day schedule that existed before March 13<sup>th</sup>. We know that this is everyone's heart desire but it is important that our driving force behind any move forward is **safety**.

With that in mind, we would also like to respond to questions that have come in over the last few days related to the poll:

- **It's just a poll:** First, we want to emphasize that this is just a poll. Some parents have been very vocal about having their children in school every day. The poll was designed to see if under current conditions, the majority of our in-person families prefer the hybrid model or a shortened day, all in mode. We are looking for your preference; we are not locking you into a plan.
- **Timing of Phase II Implementation:** Covid-19 conditions are changing daily. While we would like to move to Phase II quickly, we are also closely monitoring conditions in our area to determine the safest time to make a major change to our program.

- **School Hours During Phase II:** The in-person school day under Phase II would end at 1:20PM in order to be able to provide all subjects with no remote learning after the children go home. Children will be given age-appropriate scheduled snack breaks with no lunch period being scheduled.
- **At Home Learners:** Please be assured that we have the utmost care and concern for your children and will continue to give them the attention they very much deserve in Phase II.

**Town Hall:** We continue to hear from parents that they would like to hear directly from our school's leadership team. For this reason, we will be hosting a virtual town hall next Thursday night at 7:00pm. You may submit any questions or comments that you have by Wednesday at noon. These will be the only questions that will be addressed that evening. Please use this email: [pandemic@svmsnj.org](mailto:pandemic@svmsnj.org)