

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy, U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona Visit Bergenfield High School to Highlight Importance of In-Person Learning

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BERGENFIELD – Governor Phil Murphy and U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona today visited Bergenfield High School to discuss the importance of in-person learning. While the pandemic led to a temporary statewide closure of schools in March 2020, public schools serving over 95% of New Jersey's nearly 1.4 million students are now learning in-person either on a full-time or hybrid schedule. Governor Murphy has also required all schools to provide full-time, in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year, with no remote learning option available.

"We know that in-person learning is crucial to the academic success and social well-being of our students," **said Governor Murphy**. "I am pleased to say that almost all of New Jersey's students are now back in their classrooms. Bergenfield High School is a shining example of a school community that worked tirelessly to safely reopen its doors to students for five days per week, in-person learning. I thank Secretary Cardona for taking the time to visit Bergenfield High School, and look forward to continue working with him to build on our shared commitment to a high-quality education for all our students."

"Here at this school and in this state, it is clear that children come first," **said U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona**. "Students belong in school and that's what we saw today. The experience for these students is more normal than it was three to four months ago, twelve months ago because of the work led by the Governor, the principal, the superintendent, the Commissioner to make sure we are keeping children first."

"As Acting Commissioner, I have seen firsthand the hard work that New Jersey school leaders, educators, and others in our school communities have put into safely reopening classrooms," **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Education Commissioner**. "This effort was a partnership at the federal, state and local levels. Bergenfield High School is emblematic of the effort among all the educators, school administrators, and support staff throughout New Jersey to provide students with safe, in-person instruction. I join Governor Murphy in welcoming Secretary Cardona to Bergenfield High School, and we welcome the Biden Administration's commitment to ensure New Jersey's school system remains safe and strong."

"It was a tremendous honor to welcome Governor Murphy, Secretary Cardona, and Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan to Bergenfield High School," **said Bergenfield Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Christopher Tully**. "Their visit today is evidence of the authentic relationships that have been forged during the pandemic through their ongoing communication, transparency, and commitment to schools. On behalf of the Bergenfield Board of Education, I would like to thank the entire Bergenfield Learning Community for their tireless cooperation, support, and dedication when striving to safely provide in-person learning for our students five days per week. Our extraordinary visit today should serve as congratulations and confirmation that when stakeholders on all levels fully cooperate, we can accomplish even the most challenging goals."

"What a great day it was here at Bergenfield High School! It was an honor and a pleasure to meet with Governor Murphy, Secretary Cardona, and Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan," **said Bergenfield High School Principal, Jim Fasano**. "They recognized the hard work and dedication of all of the stakeholders in our learning community in getting students

back into the building safely and comfortably. It was a real team effort, and we are all grateful for the clear guidelines in the roadmap back to opening schools safely. Our students had the opportunity to meet with our distinguished guests, and provide some feedback on their perspectives."

Currently in New Jersey, there are only eight local education agencies statewide without some form of in-person education. 99% of school districts offer in-person learning either on a full-time or hybrid schedule, while only 3% of New Jersey students are enrolled in all-remote local education agencies. The Murphy Administration recently announced the launch (<https://www.nj.gov/education/broadcasts/2021/may/24/ARP-ESSERFundsApplicationandUpdate.pdf>) of applications for the latest round of education stimulus funding from the American Rescue Plan to support school reopening.

Governor Phil Murphy

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