

August 30, 2020

Dear Dr. Meloche and Members of the Board of Education,

Being responsible for meeting the needs of very young learners (ages 3-5), there are daily, unique challenges that the entire staff of the Barclay Early Childhood Center is committed to facing in the safest and most respectful manner. Toileting, diapering, feeding, self-care (taking care of personal hygiene, personal items, clothing etc.), developing physical and emotional regulation skills and practices, supporting physical and communication needs, supporting physical and emotional behavioral challenges and monitoring health concerns are some of the many details that the Barclay Community handles even before we can consider traditional developmental therapeutic and academic skills for our young and quite vulnerable, students. These challenges and situations require extremely close contact with students to meet basic needs.

Covid 19 and the unique needs of the Barclay population have required us to rethink best practice in meeting the developmental needs of our learners. As we consider the **WE** Return to Learn Plan, there are many questions, that, without answers, leave us scared and ill equipped to plan for maintaining safety for our students and staff members. Safety first for all, that is our responsibility. In order for us plan responsibly, support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of our duties and be able to be effective educators, we need more time to redefine the educational programming at Barclay Early Childhood Center given the restraints of Covid-19.

We truly believe that district administration, union representation, principals, volunteers and community members have worked very hard to create the **WE** Return to Learn Plan in Cherry Hill. We appreciate every attempt to make Barclay as safe as possible, however, we feel there are many unanswered questions regarding the safety of our building, district protocols and implementation of a socially distanced special needs preschool program given the amount of support our population requires. We still have many concerns about bringing the students back into the school building without the appropriate amount of time to reinvent our specialized programming needs and address the safety of the students and staff. We know as the Superintendent and Board of Education of the Cherry Hill Public Schools, you remain dedicated to the responsibility to protect the staff and students of this district as do we, your staff members who are charged with the task of implementing the district plan.

We want to be with our students, we want to be back in our building, and we want to provide a school experience that will safely meet the social-emotional, educational and therapeutic needs of our diverse population. In order to do so, **WE NEED MORE TIME!**

We would gladly meet with you to discuss the specifics of our concerns and help be a part of the problem-solving process.

Respectfully,

The Staff at Barclay Early Childhood Center