

# City elementary students return to in-person instruction

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Students were scheduled to return to the city's elementary school Monday following an extended Christmas break. During a virtual Board of Education meeting Jan. 7, Superintendent Robert Garguilo said even though COVID-19 cases spiked in the county last week, the county

Health Department was in favor of reopening the school as scheduled.

"We had a long discussion about the vaccination process, which is going to be a little bit tedious for school districts," Garguilo said.

He said there were a number of questions about COVID-19 vaccinations, such as whether people still need to wear a mask or can safely travel after having gotten

both shots.

"Right now, were in kind of a flux as far as what's going to transpire with the vaccinations and how they are going to schedule it," Garguilo said.

It would be helpful if the school had a date set for vaccinations for teachers, he said.

Principal Zack Palombo said it may be a good idea for teachers to receive their

vaccinations on a Friday in case there are any harmful side effects. Garguilo said the second shot may have some side effects for a day or so.

Palombo said even though school was held on a virtual basis last week, about 11 teachers were working from the building. He said teachers said they wanted to have the students back into their classrooms.

Garguilo said the seven-day and 10-day travel restrictions were still in effect. Students traveling to states or countries other than New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware or Connecticut, if testing is not available, must isolate for 10 days after they return to New Jersey. If tested and negative on or after day three, upon re-entering New Jersey, a student can return to school after seven

days beginning the day after they return home with no symptoms or fever.

School Business Administrator John Thomas administered the oath of office to three re-elected school board members: Sharon Lee Kustra, Larry Reed and Thomas Rippman.

The board appointed Dawn Austin as board president and Kustra as vice president.

## Trump

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law should be arrested and prosecuted.

"And I say the same as respect to the thugs that barged into the U.S. Capitol and did so in a chaotic manner that led to all of the events that we are now discussing. So I condemn it in the strongest possible terms as I did the events that took place over the summer, but to have it occur in Congress and the U.S. Capitol and the seat of our nation's government is sad and particularly troublesome."

Brendan Sciarra, Cape May County Democratic Party chairman, called the assault on the Capitol "an embarrassment."

"I think they've been enticed by false hopes of the election and that just demonstrates that we have a fair system that works and it's democracy and we need to make sure that upholds because we are a nation that other nations model," Sciarra said.

He said he is most con-

cerned about America's standing around the world.

"That's my biggest concern. When you travel you realize that America is a beacon. I think sometimes we have taken a second seat and it doesn't really help. It gives power to our foreign enemies to use as propaganda," he said.

Asked to comment, Cape May County Republican Party Chairman Michael Donohue directed a reporter to listen to his conservative radio talk show Jan. 7 on 98.7 The Coast. While condemning the violence, Donohue tried to redirect the blame.

The following comments are from the broadcast:

"What happened in the nation's capital was inexcusable, but we all have to ask the question, 'why?'" Donohue said, adding that those who do not ask have a narrow personal agenda.

"If you think it's as simple as Donald Trump gave a speech, again, you have a personal political agenda to drive, you don't want to analyze this situation,"

Donohue said. "There were forces there in the United States Capitol who wanted this to happen, who encouraged it to happen, and it wasn't Donald Trump."

America started with protests of an oppressive government, Donohue said, adding that last summer "left-wing, violent fascists took the streets of our cities in America, looted and burned buildings which political leaders on the left celebrated."

Donohue condemned the rioters that stormed the Capitol for the destruction of the people's property, terrorizing elected officials and putting law enforcement officials in the position of having to draw their weapons on Americans who refused to follow the rule of law. He said he believed leftist fascists were included in the group that stormed the Capitol, but acknowledged Trump supporters, conservatives and Republicans were part of the rioters.

A group numbering in the thousands, some bearing flags supporting Trump, white supremacist groups and even the Confederacy, as well as MAGA hats and other Trump paraphernalia, marched from the scene of a rally led by President Donald Trump at which he repeated his false claims that the election was stolen and vowed "never to concede," inciting the crowd to march to the Capitol building from the Ellipse just south of the White House.

"All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical Democrats," Trump told the crowd, according to news casts of the event. "We will never give up. We will never concede. It will never happen. You don't concede when there's theft involved. Our country has

had enough. We will not take it anymore."

At the rally, Trump continued to pressure Vice President Mike Pence, who was presiding over the final certification by Congress, and Republican lawmakers.

"I hope Mike is gonna do the right thing. I hope so. I hope so, because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election," Trump said, claiming nefariously that "one of the top constitutional lawyers in our country" informed him the vice president has "the absolute right to" throw out the election results.

Many at the rally followed the president's orders to march up the National Mall toward the Capitol in order to "give our Republicans the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country."

As then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) delivered a speech criticizing the efforts to overturn the election, Trump supporters clashed with law enforcement outside.

The mob eventually smashed windows and stormed the Capitol Rotunda, forcing members of Congress to hide beneath desks and eventually flee for their own safety. Pence, who had been the focus of increasingly heated vitriol from Trump, was evacuated for his own safety.

The County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey released the following statement:

"Yesterday we witnessed an unprecedented and malicious attack on a pillar of our nation's democracy — the certification of a free and fair election as prescribed by the U.S. Constitution. The mob of rioters was a sickening display of everything America is not — this was not pa-

triotism, but rather terrorism. After seeing the response in Washington, D.C., to the BLM protests this past summer, the lack of preparation for the well-publicized event that was supposed to be a protest, but clearly with the tension and division in this country predictably would lead to violence, at a minimum raises the question — are all Americans and their beliefs equally protected by the law?"

Suleiman also said members of Congress, including U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew, D-2nd, bear some responsibility for the chaos and destruction.

"The approximately 120 senators and representatives who fanned the flames of sedition by trying to overturn a free and fair election should either resign their seats or be expelled from Congress. Officials like Ted Cruz, Josh Hawley and Jeff Van Drew have violated their oaths to protect and defend the Constitution and are unfit to serve."

Van Drew released the following statement amid the events on Capitol Hill: "What is happening at the Capitol is unacceptable, un-American and disrespectful of democracy. The debate many protesters have been asking for was happening today and because of these actions it was abruptly ended. Everyone has the right to peacefully protest but what happened today was not peaceful or productive."

"Today's debate was about the rule of law and by harming police officers, being violent and breaking into a federal building, the rule of law was broken. I ask that the president reach out and ask the protesters to leave the Capitol building immediately."

### Future of the GOP

Davis said the future of

the GOP is in question.

"Time will tell. This happens whenever there's a president of our party leaving office. It's a time of introspection where we want to lead the country in the future and unfortunately over the course of the last month or so we have been our own party's worst enemy," he said. "When you look at Georgia and you look at the infighting that has been going on with the governor, the secretary of state fighting with the president. It is unhealthy and has led to two losses of U.S. Senate seats in that state."

Davis prefers to try to effect change locally.

"What I focus on as a county chairman is our own county of Atlantic. And I'm fortunate that we have unity here. We have great elected officials who respect law enforcement, who respect the rule of law and other than a few peeps here and there, everyone is on the same page and part of the same Republican team in Atlantic County. We are going to focus on that," he said. "We are focused on delivering good government here, that's what we have done for decades. We are going to continue to do so and not be distracted by this nonsense that's going on in Washington, D.C."

Suleiman called for the president's removal from office.

"We cannot allow President Trump to incite more violence in his final two weeks in office. The president's Cabinet must invoke the 25th Amendment and remove Donald Trump from office immediately," he said.

Sciarra said the attack on the Capitol could lead to a split in the GOP.

"When seas become calm, I think that definitely can help us out," he said. "Do they stick with Trump or do they double down? Those are questions that will be answered in the next couple of months," he said. "You can see signs of that happening but it's going to be interesting. Sarah Palin called for a third party, so we'll see."

He applauded the efforts in Georgia, where more people voted in the runoff election to decide control of the Senate than in the general election.

"Registering them and getting the vote out is the true model of what can be done with hard work," he said.

## Murphy

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are in the right place, there was "no need to get into the mix."

### Anti-Semitism

At the start of the press conference, Murphy showed photos of two of the Capitol insurrectionists, one wearing a 6MWE T-shirt (6 million weren't enough) and another wearing a "Camp Auschwitz" T-shirt, both glorifying the Holocaust in Nazi Germany during World War II in which 6 million Jews and 11 million others were killed.

The governor reminded the public that "anti-Semitism in this world, in this country, and, sadly, in this state, is alive and well and runs deep." He said for all of the people who haven't spoken out against the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, "your silence is enabling."

Referring to the "jerks" in the T-shirts, "this is who you are standing with." They are the most violent members of the right wing "and when you refuse to denounce what they've done, it's the same as giving them a pass. When you excuse their actions, you empower them. Think about what your silence in the face of political violence is enabling."

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