

November 20, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

At last night's school board meeting, a recommendation was made to temporarily return to 100% virtual learning for all students in grades K-12. Please see the proposed timeline and relevant details below.

- November 25: Proposed last day students attend school in buildings
- November 30: Proposed virtual learning start
- December 9: Goal return to in-person hybrid learning, *provided* we can staff our schools
- Number of school days spent in virtual learning during this period: Seven

You can [view comments](#) made by Dr. Brennan, Chief Medical Officer & Senior V.P of the University of Pennsylvania Health Systems, and [the Superintendent's report](#) which contains the recommendation and information regarding staffing challenges, COVID-19 trends, and contact tracing.

The Board of School Directors will hold a special meeting on Monday, November 23rd at 7:00 PM to vote on the recommendation to return to 100% virtual from November 30th through December 8. If we do move forward with the temporary virtual learning period, then at the December 3rd board meeting, we will review staffing numbers as well as consider the 7-day data trends. The goal is for all students to return to in-person hybrid learning at this time. However, it is possible that only elementary schools and students who receive a high level of special education services would return at that time and older learners would extend the virtual learning period.

Several factors are considered in a decision to return to an all-virtual format:

### **Staffing Challenges**

Over the past two weeks, we have experienced an increasing number of staffing shortages across various job categories in our buildings and departments. This includes teachers, instructional assistants, nurses, bus drivers, as well as substitutes for all of these positions. Some are due to quarantine, some are a result of changing childcare needs due to COVID-19 closures, and others are regular absences. We have asked everyone to perform a self-screening before coming into our buildings and stay home when not feeling well. Our staff is appropriately exercising caution.

### **Travel Quarantine**

This week the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health announced [updated face covering and traveler testing orders](#). This new travel guidance states that anyone who travels out of state for the holiday must either present a negative COVID test before returning to work/school or, must quarantine for 14 days. This may impact the ability of our staff to return to in-person teaching if

they must quarantine. We are experiencing a substitute shortage across the region, state, and nation. This, too, significantly impacts our ability to staff our schools and various departments.

### **COVID-19 Trends and Contact Tracing**

While the numbers of positive COVID-19 cases in Haverford Township and Delaware County are rising, the Health and Safety plans that we have put in place have helped us to mitigate the transmission of the virus in our schools. These plans have also helped up to identify close contacts if there is a student or staff positive case. Contact tracing is a very labor-intensive process. As staffing shortages continue, we may not be able to keep up with the necessary contact tracing with the same fidelity that we have employed thus far.

We recognize that shifting to a virtual model presents families with the challenge of adjusting their carefully made plans and routines. Please know that every decision about our instructional model throughout this pandemic is made thoughtfully and with considerable deliberation. We are working to provide the best possible instructional environment while also keeping the safety, health, and welfare of our students and staff at the heart of our decisions. Thank you for your patience and partnership in following the guidelines that will help us all stay healthy.

Sincerely,  
Maureen Reusche, Ed.D.  
Superintendent