

February 17, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The purpose of this communication is to overview a timeline and scope of work that needs to move forward as we continue to prepare for the guidance the Chester County Health Department (CCHD) has informed us is going to change and when we are able to return **K-5 students** to in-person instruction for five full days. In the interim, we anticipate that the board of school directors will approve the alternate Friday in-person learning at the secondary level (6-12 students) at the February 18th meeting. Building principals will continue communication with secondary parents, guardians, and students following this approval.

Presented below is an overview of our assessment of the current COVID data, an outline of work we are undertaking in order to be prepared, and an identification of the challenges we must seek to overcome to return K-5 students in March to in-person instruction for five full days.

[Data published weekly \(Fridays\) by the Chester County Health Department](#) (CCHD) identifies the Cumulative Incidence Rate per 100,000 and also the Percent Positivity. You can see the rates have been decreasing; with a few minor increases throughout the four-week time period. Overall, we seem to be stabilizing. This is certainly a step in the right direction.

The latest CDC guidance issued Friday 2/12 identifies four thresholds of community transmission: Low, Moderate, Substantial, and High.

Using the CCHD data published 2/12 (positivity and incidence rates), Delaware County is identified as “High Transmission” with respect to Incidence Rate per 100,000 (140) and at the same time “Moderate Transmission” with respect to Percent Positivity (7.37%) as described in the CDC document: [New Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19*](#)

The above numbers serve as one data point. We have additional data points that can and should be considered:

- [Number of cases](#)– The case count for a school building includes any individual (students or staff) with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 who was physically present in the school setting while infectious.
 - October 2020 through December 2020: 58 positive cases contagious while in the building.
 - January 4, 2021, through February 12, 2021: 44 positive cases contagious while in the building.
- We have experienced linked transmission in only two instances in two buildings (in the fall of 2020).

When the time comes to transition to five full days of in-person instruction, it is important to note the following:

- The minimum level of social distancing will be less than six feet. There is not enough space to maintain six-feet of distance if all hybrid students return to in-person. Returning all students currently in hybrid (not including students enrolled in Haverford Online), we will have many classes with an enrollment in excess of 20 students.
- The social distancing within the classrooms will vary not only by school but also by classrooms within the same school. Please know that our principals, facilities, and maintenance staff are working diligently on classroom furniture configurations that enable 3 feet of social distancing.
- An overwhelming majority of families currently enrolled in the hybrid program must be willing to make the transition to five full days of in-person instruction. We can not accommodate the staffing additions and changes that would otherwise be necessary. Haverford Online is at capacity at some grade levels and very near capacity at others.
- We will need at least eight (8) parents/guardians who are willing to work as lunch monitors at each elementary building (we will hire on a temporary basis) The time commitment is two and a half hours a day. [Clearances](#) are necessary. Click [here](#) to apply!
 - The additional lunch monitors will participate in COVID testing each day they work.
- We will continue to encourage families to transport their children so as to not overcrowd the busses. Students riding the bus will be seated two to a seat.
- As part of the plan, we will increase other mitigation strategies, including:
 - Voluntary rapid testing for staff - which we are beginning this week
 - We will introduce surveillance testing of students (depending on test availability)
 - We will improve our requirements for the types of masks being worn
 - We will remain committed to all other mitigation protocols

As our planning process continues we are at a point where it is important to gather a commitment from our elementary parents/guardians of students currently enrolled in the hybrid program. This commitment will be made via a response to a survey parents/guardians of students learning in the hybrid model will receive later. At this time, we cannot accommodate changes out of Haverford Online.

You will receive communication from your building principal about an information meeting which will be held at each school next week. The purpose of such a meeting is to provide some insight into what the school and classrooms will look like when we return K-5 students to in-person instruction for five full days. We believe this meeting is important in order to enable you to respond to a survey with as much knowledge as possible.

Information about the survey:

For planning, this commitment must be made for the remainder of the school year. While we will continue to respond to requests for individual changes on a case-by-case basis, we need to understand commitments so we can properly balance class sizes and staffing needs. Once an elementary student's placement is confirmed by the district, a change to the placement may not be possible depending on class sizes.

- By Monday, March 1, we are requesting each elementary family commit to either full-day in-person instruction or Haverford Online if/when elementary schools shift to full in-person instruction.
- The survey will be issued to all families on 2/25 with a return date of 3/1. This date follows the parent/guardian meetings the elementary principals will hold to provide parents/guardians with insight into the learning environment we can create for five full days on in-person instruction.
- Upon moving our elementary schools to full in-person instruction the hybrid learning option will no longer be a choice unless we as a district or school(s) need to transition back to hybrid due to significant changes to the virus-related data or upon direction from the CCHD.
- Current hybrid families choosing to move to Haverford Online will be assigned a new teacher and classroom to join (initiated if/when the transition to in-person instruction becomes possible).

These are not easy times for anyone and no matter the direction we move, there are those who will feel we should have taken another path. I recognize the stress and anxiety all of us have experienced and continue to experience and I thank you for your patience and understanding,

Sincerely,
Maureen Reusche, Ed.D.
Superintendent