



BETHEL PARK

S C H O O L D I S T R I C T

November 25, 2020

Dear Bethel Park Community,

Re: Letter of Attestation to the PA Dept. of Health

Over the past few days, a number of media reports have circulated regarding the Pennsylvania Department of Health's (PADOH) newest health and safety mandates. That information, while valuable, has unfortunately led to some confusion among Bethel Park families. In an effort to clear up some of those misconceptions, and to be as transparent as possible, we wanted to share with you our plans as well as our rationale and prospective timelines.

On Monday, Nov. 23, PADOH issued several COVID-19 mitigation orders including the completion of an Attestation (Form) Ensuring Implementation of Mitigation Efforts ("Attestation"), which must be filed with Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) by no later than 5 p.m., on Monday, Nov. 30. The Attestation requires school districts to confirm whether they will be providing in-person instruction to all or some students; or whether they plan to remain in full remote learning until the county has emerged from the "substantial" rate of community transmission for at least two weeks.

Though the decision window is obviously very narrow, the District has reaffirmed its commitment to providing in-person learning for students beginning as early as Tuesday, Dec. 8. Should that change, the District will provide as much advanced notice as possible so that our families can make the appropriate plans. The Board feels that a full remote learning option for the duration of "substantial" community spread would simply prove too restrictive an option for most Bethel Park families.

The intent of the District all along has been to stay the course with the goal of returning as many students as possible to in-person instruction as quickly as we can safely do so. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 transmission data and we will chart our next course of action based off the information we are gathering as well as the guidance received from local and state officials.

Athletics (including practices) and other in-person extracurricular activities remain suspended until in-person learning resumes. This decision was reached in an effort to minimize risk for our students and staff members, and to help ensure a safe return to in-person instruction as promptly as possible.

It is imperative to note that while Bethel Park did permit fall sports participation while the District was in full remote learning, the data was very different then than it is today. In the fall, Allegheny County's transmission levels never rose above the "moderate" range. Unfortunately, today, Allegheny County,



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like most of the rest of the Commonwealth, currently finds itself in the “substantial” range of community spread of the disease, as defined by PADOH.

Bethel Park School District’s criteria for in-person learning continues to be based upon:

- Allegheny County’s levels of transmission of COVID-19
- Number of schools that we are required to close within the District
- The ability to properly staff our classrooms
- New recommendations for school buildings’ identification of COVID-19 cases

We acknowledge that this is an incredibly challenging time for everyone and that our decisions may not always result in universal agreement on every issue. However, the health and safety of our entire school community will continue to remain the District’s top priority as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Dimperio, Ph.D.
Acting Superintendent, Bethel Park School District