

Dear Bethel Park families,

For the past several months, the Bethel Park School District staff and administration have been diligently preparing for the students' safe return to school. Earlier this week, the school board ratified a plan which will bring many students back to in-person instruction two days per week, beginning on Monday, Oct. 5. In November, [if the Allegheny County COVID-19 positivity rates are in the low range and other requirements are met](#), Bethel Park intends to bring the children back to school on a five days per week basis.

However, if the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that the situation remains dynamic and many unexpected challenges continue to come our way.

Safely transporting students to and from school is one of the most important things we do and it is a responsibility we take very seriously. Unfortunately, there is an ongoing shortage of school bus drivers and it has impacted school districts throughout the county, including Bethel Park. That has become a greater challenge in recent days as a result of some unexpected last-minute departures among our existing transportation staff, leaving the District shorthanded to start the school year.

The recent driver shortage has forced the District to make a number of changes to its transportation schedule, including the consolidation of some bus routes. That will, in turn, mean more children on our school buses than we had planned for and some students' pick up and drop off times will also likely change. Those changes will be communicated directly to the impacted families.

Families who are able drive their children to school are strongly encouraged to do so. Families who rely on Bethel Park School District to transport their children to and from school should expect delays and more students on our buses than anyone had originally anticipated, especially to start the year.

Also, please remind your child to wear a mask at all times on the school bus and while waiting

for the school bus. Having a safe fleet of buses has been a longstanding priority for Bethel Park. Additional safety protocols relative to distancing, use of hand sanitizer and face coverings, no food or gum, and additional cleaning protocols and sanitization of buses are designed to provide additional safety for riders. Please remind your children of these requirements, which are also outlined in a video we will send out to families later today.

We are currently in the process of hiring and certifying new drivers and hope to have them join our team in the not-too-distant future. If you are interested or know of anyone interested in driving a bus for Bethel Park, [please visit employment section of the district's website](#). BPSD will facilitate and cover the cost of training.

We appreciate your patience as we work together to best handle the many challenges inherent to this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Dimperio, Ph.D.

Interim Superintendent, Bethel Park School District