



# BETHEL PARK

SCHOOL DISTRICT

December 3, 2020

Dear Families,

***Re: Bethel Park School District still on track to resume Hybrid Instruction on Dec. 8, 2020***

A few weeks ago, Bethel Park School District became one of many Allegheny County School districts to temporarily transition from a hybrid to a fully remote instructional model after the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) designated the county as being in the *substantial* rate of community transmission.

In the Nov. 17 letter explaining our plan, we also declared our intention to **return to hybrid in-person instruction on Tuesday, Dec. 8**, pending the best available data as well as the guidance we received from local, state, and federal officials.

PDE has provided guidance but continues to leave all school closure decisions up to the individual school districts, provided schools are willing to attest to their commitment to following the state-wide masking order and protocol for addressing positive cases of COVID-19 in schools. PDE recommends schools within counties that have a *substantial* rate of transmission provide fully remote learning. Allegheny County falls within this category. While PDE's county COVID-19 classification continues to play an important role in the District's decision making, we are also considering additional criteria such as the COVID-19 positivity and incident rates in the Bethel Park community, which are currently in the *moderate* range (5-10 percent) of community transmission. Also, the School District's protocols and procedures as well as the vigilance of our students and staff have, so far, led to very few incidents of spread within our schools.

Federal health officials have also encouraged schools to make reopening decisions based on available data including levels of community transmission and their capacity to implement appropriate mitigation measures in schools to protect students, teachers, administrators, and other staff.

The CDC also says schools should consider other aspects of students' risk and wellbeing that arise when schools do not reopen for in-person classes. This includes the potential adverse impacts on students' social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health, as well as the critical services provided to students to help mitigate health disparities and serve children in need, after-school programs and mental health services.

After careful consideration of all of the guidance the District has received, **Bethel Park remains committed to returning to hybrid in-person instruction (A/B schedule as before) on Tuesday, Dec. 8**, for families interested in taking advantage of in-person learning opportunities. Additionally, students



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who receive vocational education as well as Kindergarteners, English learners, and those who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) with the signed Notice of Recommended Educational Placements (NOREP) for parental consent will return to in-person instruction up to four days per week with asynchronous instruction on Fridays. Also, athletics and other extracurricular activities will be permitted to resume.

Families who are uncomfortable sending their students to school under the current conditions will **continue to have the option of participating in full remote instruction.**

Bethel Park is committed to following PDE's updated mitigation and closure recommendations based on the student population in each individual building. The district's mitigation efforts to date have included:

- Proper Wearing of Masks
- Practicing Good Hygiene Habits (Including Hand Washing)
- Physical Distancing
- Following the Guidance Regarding the Identification of COVID-19 Cases
- Classroom Staffing Considerations
- Daily Sanitization of All District Facilities and Vehicles
- Not Having Outside Visitors, Including Parents and Guardians of Students

The School District has developed its plan to reopen our schools, thanks in large part to the vigilance of our community and our families' willingness to keep their children home when they are not feeling well. That proven commitment to maintaining public health and safety has led to a comparatively low transmission rate in our schools relative to many other area school districts. Going forward, our families will have an even greater level of responsibility to help mitigate the spread of coronavirus in Bethel Park schools.

The School District will continue to follow the data and the guidance it receives from local, county and state officials and we want to remind everyone that all of our decisions are subject to change as more information becomes available. As the events of the past several months have continually demonstrated, the rapidly changing conditions could have an immediate impact on the District's decision making, which could lead to the temporary closure of your child's school building. That is why we implore Bethel Park families who haven't already done so to **please make contingency child care plans NOW in the event that circumstances do change without much advanced notice.**

Thank you to our families for continuing to diligently follow our health and safety protocols, which include all mandated social distancing and personal safety practices, including wearing proper and approved face-coverings, maintaining at least six feet of personal distance from others whenever possible, proper hand-washing for at least 20 seconds each time, and regularly cleaning and disinfecting frequently-used or shared spaces, items, and surfaces. The District also discourages carpooling but reminds



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everyone that if you are in a car with people outside your family, please remember to always properly wear your mask when in transit to and from school.

Sincerely,

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