



November 23, 2020

Good Evening Upper Darby School District Families,

We are writing to provide another update on our pandemic reopening of schools plan. During the month of November, I have been visiting with Home and School Associations in virtual meetings throughout the District to provide some insight into the information contributing to my decision last month to remain in virtual and updates to the plan. During my visits with the Home and School Associations, parents and students were very engaged and asked very thoughtful questions. I also noticed that parents and families have been very supportive and encouraging to our Principals, teachers, staff, the School Board, and my administration team. I am thankful to you for remaining engaged with the District and for your support throughout this pandemic. In this communication, I am providing you with an update on our District guidance and approach for holiday events throughout the rest of November and into January of next year.

First, I would like to provide you with the November 17, 2020 announcement on new COVID-19 mitigation efforts that were announced by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine. The efforts include: [Supporting our Health Care Systems](#), [Travel Mitigations](#), [New Masking Order](#), and recommendations for [Recommendations for Colleges and Universities](#) (all hyperlinked for your review).

I recognize that Governor Tom Wolf entered into a [joint statement](#) with other state governors indicating schools remaining open. While it is true that a governors' joint statement was released, other states (PDE, PA DOH, and CCHD) and local health experts have provided other guidance. Nonetheless, the school district is still facing significant shortages. At the time of this communication, the District has 116 (85 professional) staff out on quarantine. We have additional staff out on FFCRA and working from home as a result of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). As we work through our plan to reopen schools, we receive a constant stream of information and

guidance from local and national medical and healthcare experts, the Chester County Health Department, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the State. As you might imagine, there is a lot of content to consume, process, and evaluate for potential value to our school district given our unique needs, challenges, and facilities limitations. We will continue to monitor positivity and community transmission rates and follow best practices around social distancing, mask-wearing, and proper hygiene as we make decisions about the reopening of schools.

**Please note the following important updates to the pandemic reopening of schools plan:**

- **ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES K-12 will be in VIRTUAL LEARNING effective Monday, November 30th to January 18th.** This includes K-12 low incidence programs of Life Skills Support, Autistic Support and Multi-Disability Support at Hillcrest Elementary, Westbrook Park Elementary, Primos Elementary, Drexel Hill Middle, and Upper Darby High School.
- **In-person instruction for students in K-12 low incidence programs of life skills support, autistic support, multi-disability support at Hillcrest Elementary, Westbrook Park Elementary, Primos Elementary, Drexel Hill Middle, and Upper Darby High School will resume on January 19th.** These K-12 low incident programs will pause from November 30 to January 18th with a start date of January 19th.
- Our goal is to return students in **GRADES K-3 ONLY** to the cohort/flexible/in-person instruction model on January 19, 2021. Accomplishing this will require that all teachers use the November 30, 2020 through January 14, 2021 time period as an opportunity to **RESET**, that is, to put their affairs in order so that they successfully quarantine in preparation for a return to in-person instruction. We are also enacting an all-hands-on-deck approach in order to execute this plan for our K-3 students, low incidence special education programs, and their families. This will require that we use our resources strategically as we work through staffing schools appropriately for the January 19th start.
- All teachers and staff in grades K-12 are required to return to their respective school buildings on January 15, 2021, as we are still required to meet state-mandates around standardized testing.

Again, we will continue to monitor COVID-19 positivity rates and community transmission cases per 100,000 and to use this data to inform our decision-making.

Our intent is to provide notification to families two weeks in advance. Given the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, any notifications will be as close to the two-week deadline as possible.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through our pandemic reopening of schools plan. You have asked very thoughtful questions and have remained engaged. On behalf of our District, I want to sincerely thank you for that and all you do. We know these are challenging times and that you are doing your best to care for your families' needs. Thank you for your support and have a wonderful, safe Thanksgiving.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Event</b>
November 30 - December 23	<b>Virtual/at-home learning</b> continues for all students K-12.
December 24 - January 3	Winter Break - Offices and Schools Closed
January 4 - January 14	<b>Virtual/at-home learning</b> learning resumes for all students K-12.
January 15	All <b>teachers and staff</b> report back to buildings.
January 19	K-3 students and K-12 Low Incidence Programs in Autisitic Support, Life Skills Support and Multi-Disability Support return for cohort/flexible/in-person instruction  Grades 4-5, Middle, and High Schools Students continue in <b>virtual/at-home learning</b> .