

KEYSTONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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November 24, 2020

RE: Extension of Remote Learning Mode

Dear Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff:

I've said many times in a variety of communications that we continue to navigate the ever-changing conditions of COVID-19. Yesterday, the Governor, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Department of Education issued new Orders which will directly impact school district operations. Based on the most recent data sets available for the Keystone School District, our COVID-related numbers have continued to worsen in recent days. The Incidence Rate for Keystone School District (*aggregated from zip codes in our district's calculations*) has climbed to 369.02 and our PCR Test Percent Positive has climbed to 36.99%. That being said, we know the numbers are higher yet given the responsiveness of some individuals to seek testing or accurately report their condition.

While we had hoped to return to in-person teaching and learning on December 1, 2020, the current conditions in our local district, the county, and the Commonwealth as a whole, point to a heightened risk for in-person instruction. Public health staff are overwhelmed and running behind in case investigations and contact tracing. The information we received from the PA DoH and PA DoE clearly emphasize a requirement for more consistent and intensive disease mitigation efforts. One of those mitigation efforts includes maintaining remote-only instructional models during this current surge in case counts.

The Keystone School District will maintain and extend our remote learning model through December 11, 2020, with a tentative return to in-person teaching and learning on December 14, 2020. While we understand the hardship this creates for our school community, it is necessary to further evaluate local case counts and to mitigate further spread of the virus. Furthermore, we wanted to provide as much advance notice as possible to our parents/guardians, students and staff so that you could plan and prepare for the weeks ahead.

Revised Face Covering Guidance

While we await clarification on some of the points associated with the revised, "strengthened" facial coverings requirements, the following points have been added, revised or restated:

- "Face-covering breaks" may only occur when individuals are spaced at least six feet apart and cannot last longer than 10 minutes;
- The facial coverings requirement applies to sport activities, which are said to include active engagement in athletics, recess and physical education (**this point is currently being clarified by public health officials and more carefully considered*);
- Increased compliance and enforcement efforts to ensure individuals are *properly* wearing a face covering (covering of the nose and mouth) consistently;
- "Alternative to face covering" may include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth, extends below the chin and to the ears, and *leaves no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece* (i.e. this effectively eliminates the ability to wear chin-mounted face shields).

Traveler Testing and Other Requirements

The Secretary of Health issued an Order requiring anyone who visits from another state to have a negative COVID-19 test within 72-hours prior to entering the Commonwealth. Additionally, Pennsylvanians visiting other states are required to have a negative COVID-19 test within 72-hours prior to their return to the Commonwealth or to quarantine for 14-days upon return to Pennsylvania. This Order, which took effect on Friday, November 20, does not apply to people who commute to and from another state for work or medical treatment. This Order applies to all individuals associated with the school district, including students. Students who travel out-of-state must provide the results of a negative COVID-19 test within 72-hours prior to their return to in-person instruction and/or participation in athletics/extra-curricular activities. Obviously, this most recent requirement is based on parent/student self-reporting.

Technology/Connectivity

Please contact your respective school office if you are having issues with District-issued technology or connectivity issues. The Keystone Elementary School and the Keystone Junior-Senior High School have experienced very positive “attendance” and engagement numbers as they relate to participation in remote learning. We’ve attempted to take a very reasonable and flexible approach with expectations; however, students must regularly and actively engage with assigned learning activities. If you are experiencing barriers and obstacles to remote learning, please contact your respective school office to seek additional support and guidance.

If you have additional needs that relate to general student services (i.e. guidance and counseling services, student health services), please make contact with your respective school office(s) to seek additional support and guidance. We understand and recognize the extraordinary challenges that have been presented with COVID-19 and the various mitigation efforts that have been Ordered or recommended for our local communities. Many of our families are working through physical and/or mental health concerns as a result of our current circumstances. We want to help and support you through these issues as best we can.

Meal Service Delivery

The Keystone School District is currently working on a meal delivery service which would enable us to deliver free meals to students at their bus stops. We will post a “Meal Delivery Survey” link to our district’s website in order to gauge the level of interest from our district’s families. Additional communication on this topic will be available shortly.

Miscellaneous

District administration is working to evaluate the current guidance from PIAA and other organizations to determine a suitable “return-to-play” or “return-to-practice” date and plan for our student-athletes. Additional communication on this topic will be available shortly.

Sincerely,



Shawn Algoe, Superintendent