

December 22, 2020

Dear WCASD Community,

As we look ahead to January, we want to let parents know that the West Chester Area School District will operate in remote learning the first week in January (January 4 - 8). We expect to return to in-person, hybrid learning on Monday, January 11. Special education students who attend in-person, five days per week, will continue to be in-person during the first week in January. Sports and after-school activities will not run during the first week of January, but we anticipate they will resume January 11.

During the two weeks we operated in remote learning after the Thanksgiving holiday, 61 cases of COVID-19 were reported in 14 schools. None of those cases counted against the case counts to close a school because we were already operating in a remote format for those two weeks. When we returned to in-person, hybrid instruction on December 14, only seven cases were reported that week from six different schools. In essence, we were able to avoid closures due to the fallout from the Thanksgiving holiday.

We expect a similar resurgence of positive COVID-19 tests after the New Year's break. However, since the quarantine period was reduced by the CDC and PA Department of Health from 14 day to 10 days, we believe we only need to delay hybrid learning for one week in January.

Pennsylvania remains in a travel quarantine: anyone traveling out of state for longer than 24 hours is required to present a negative COVID test result before returning to school/work, or quarantine for 10 days upon return (This does not apply to people who commute across state lines for work). This is incredibly difficult to monitor. We simply cannot control what our families and staff do over the holiday. Ten days from New Year's Day takes us to Monday, January 11.

It's important to note that we are following [new guidance](#) from the PA Department of Education which outlines the number of positive cases of COVID-19 necessary in order to close a school from hybrid or in-person, to a remote learning format. Again, our goal is to maintain in-person instruction as much as possible.

Our staff, students, and parents have done an incredible job in extremely challenging circumstances. We fully understand the importance of in-person instruction, and our goal is to remain in-person, with mitigation efforts in place, as much as possible. With a vaccine becoming available, and rapid testing also more available, I am hopeful the second half of our school year will bring us several steps closer to normalcy. We will continue to communicate as we move throughout this challenging school year.

If at any time we are in person, and you want your child to learn remotely, please simply notify your child's principal (secondary students) or teacher (elementary students). We feel it's important to provide flexibility for our families.

I hope you are able to enjoy a very safe and happy holiday, and a healthy start to the new year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jim Scanlon, Superintendent

**January 4, 2021-**

- All K-12 five-day-per-week special needs students will return in-person.
- All four day per week students will return in a remote learning format.
- K-12 hybrid students will return in a remote learning format.
- All WC Cyber students will follow their regular cyber schedule.

**January 11, 2021 –**

- All K-12 five-day-per-week special needs students will return in-person.
- All four-day-per-week students will return in-person.
- All K-12 students will return in a hybrid schedule.
- All WC Cyber students will follow their regular cyber schedule.