

February 23, 2021

Dear WCASD,

Last night the West Chester Area School District approved a phased-in return to five day a week, in-person instruction for all students who would like to participate. This next phase of our reopening plan is in response to the Chester County Health Department's updated guidance for schools. When the change occurs, students may also choose to remain remote, or in the WC Cyber Program. Parents will be asked in the coming days to commit to a learning model for their student for the remainder of the school year. If transmission rates reach low enough thresholds for the next three weeks, the earliest date increased in-person instruction would occur would be March 15. We anticipate having all students who want to be back to daily in-person instruction back in our schools no later than March 22, again assuming the transmission rates have reached a low enough threshold for three consecutive weeks.

Late on Friday, the Health Department notified superintendents in Chester and Delaware Counties that it was updating guidance to support schools increasing in-person learning by reducing physical distancing, once certain thresholds for transmission are met, and providing other layers of COVID mitigation are still in place. Superintendents have been told:

- The guidance states that physical distancing of 6 feet but no less than 3 feet between students is recommended.
- County transmissions rates must be below 100 per 100,000 for three weeks before schools should consider less than six feet. (Rates were at 103 last week and may fall below 100 this week.)
- County PCR rates must be below 10% (currently at 5.68%)
- A distance of 6 feet between staff and students is still recommended, even if student distancing is reduced.

We are still waiting for official guidance and clarification on several points. The administration has been communicating regularly with legislators to urge them to work to provide vaccinations for school staff. Our School Board will be advocating for this, as well.

We know there are many questions about how we will phase students back to in-person instruction. As we gain clarification on the most recent guidance, and continue to work through some logistical issues with our staff work groups, we will quickly communicate with parents.

[The February 22 School Board presentation](#) can be viewed on our website.

We are very eager to see more students back in our schools. Thank you for your support and positivity as we continue to work through this very challenging school year.

Dr. Jim Scanlon, Superintendent