



Sharon City School District

Office of the Superintendent

November 10, 2020

Good afternoon Parents/Guardians, Staff and Students,

I am happy to report that to date, our schools have proven that they are safe learning environments for in-person teaching and learning while the worldwide pandemic continues. In fact, our local health officials have noted that they believe schools operate as some of the most effective and safe examples of organizations in our communities due to the multitude of required health and safety protocols. I applaud both our students and staff for carrying out the continued success of the plans in limiting any transmission of COVID-19 in our buildings. However, in the past two weeks our School District has seen a rise in confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 among students and staff, all of which have been traced back to household contact and/or community gatherings through community spread.

Today, I must report that a Case Avenue student, a staff member in our District Central Office, a staff member at the Middle/High School and a staff member at C. M. Musser have tested positive for COVID-19. Thankfully, the student and staff members and their families followed all of the Sharon City School District Health and Safety guidelines, reported all necessary information to the District and self-quarantined. Again, tracing by both the State Department of Health and the District have thus far indicated that there is no evidence of transmission in our school settings and no evidence that these and other previous cases are in any way linked.

Please be reminded that in all positive COVID-19 instances, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Health oversees a contact tracing process with our District's assistance. If anyone is determined to be a close contact, they will be notified by the School District as quickly as possible. Please be reminded that contact tracing involves those persons to whom an individual who has tested positive has been in close contact with. Close contacts of a case are considered to have been exposed to COVID-19 by being within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for at least 15 consecutive minutes while they were infectious. Therefore, it is important to understand why we have protocols in place for classroom/learning/lunch space that

that reduce the opportunities for close contacts for students and staff, which are vitally important and, therefore, limit close contact by definition.

I am once again asking EVERYONE to do their part in assisting our school community. Community spread in a number of areas across the country and in PA is on the rise and Mercer County is not immune as we are now witnessing increased confirmed positive cases Countywide. Recent 7-day averages of positive case counts in Mercer County are up and the most recent positivity rate in the County is 7%. Future school district decisions related to safe operations will be determined by any evidence of linked transmission of COVID-19 in a school or schools, an escalating positivity rate that would suggest an unsafe community spread and our ability to safely maintain all health/safety protocols. Everyone needs to be prepared for possible future decisions that could include periods of virtual learning for all students if needed or required based on the situational evidence.

We will work to keep you informed as the situation warrants.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Calla

Michael J. Calla
Superintendent