



Sharon City School District

Office of the Superintendent

November 19, 2020

Sharon City School District Families,

As you are aware, the District implemented our COVID-19 Health and Safety plan at the start of the 2020-21 school year and has updated it several times since. The plan has offered families one of three options for the instruction of their children: in-person learning, virtual learning and access to the Sharon Cyber Academy. We have been able to complete nearly 12 weeks in this model with the large majority of our students participating in in-person instruction. We feel strongly that students learn best while they are at school, in-person with their teacher(s) and classmates. However, COVID-19 has created challenges and obstacles that are currently making this difficult to sustain. Specifically, the number of positive COVID-19 cases in Mercer County has more than tripled during the past three weeks and we have begun to see a number of students and employees test positive for COVID-19.

When we developed our COVID-19 Health and Safety plan, we indicated that it might be necessary for us to adjust our protocols depending on the number of positive cases in our schools, the number of students and employees in quarantine, our ability to fill teacher vacancies with substitutes, and the overall spread of COVID-19 in our community. **After much consideration and consultation, we feel the time is necessary to take a short pause from our current model and move into virtual learning for all of our in-person students. Virtual learning will take place November 23 and 24, along with December 1, 2, 3, and 4.**

Although we are very aware of the inconveniences this creates for our families, please know this decision was made with the best interest of our students and staff in mind. We feel this short pause will allow for slowing the overall spread of

COVID-19 in our community, our facilities to be deeply sanitized, those currently ill with COVID-19 to heal and for those on quarantine to serve the rest of their time and return to school. The virtual learning days following Thanksgiving break will also allow us to evaluate the potential impact holiday gatherings might have on our ability to return to in-person instruction.

We are thankful in advance for your ongoing support and feel confident in the virtual instruction plan we have put into place. Virtual learning will be required for kindergarten through 12th grade students. Those students already attending virtually will continue to access teacher Google Classrooms daily. Students who have been attending school in-person have also been working in Google Classroom and utilizing their Chromebooks, and are now expected to access those Classrooms daily from home. Students are required to login daily, register their attendance and complete all assignments. We encourage you to maintain a schedule aligned with the regular school hours to keep students on track. Teachers will be available online during these times for assistance. Watch for communication from your child's teacher(s) and/or school building with specific information about learning virtually November 23, 24 and December 1, 2, 3, and 4. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions listed in the link below for additional details.

Again, we feel that learning takes place best when our students are seated at school. **Our hope is to return to in-person instruction on Monday, December 7.** Communication will be released on Wednesday, December 2 after we are able to reassess the feasibility and safety of returning to our in-person model. Remember that social distancing and limiting attendance of large gatherings will assist in minimizing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping families healthy. We appreciate your consideration of this as you make plans for the upcoming holidays.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Calla

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Superintendent

Link to the Frequently Asked Questions Document: <https://5il.co/n7x0>