

Dear School Community,

The purpose of today's message is to update you on some extremely important information regarding the opening of school. Based on current health data trends in Delaware County and Haverford Township in particular, I will recommend to the Board that the district begin the 2020-21 school year virtually. During our discussions at last week's meeting we knew that this could be a possibility. We would remain in virtual learning throughout the month of September. If health data stabilizes and the health experts are comfortable with reopening schools, we would then implement our hybrid model and bring back cohorts of students on alternating days.

Recognizing that this decision has a significant impact upon households, I want to provide an overview of the reasoning behind the recommended change to the original plan that the Board approved on July 30th.

COVID-19 Trend Data in Delaware County

On Tuesday I met with county superintendents, representatives from the Chester County Department of Health, Dr. David Rubin, Director of Policy Lab and Director of Population Health Innovation at CHOP, and Dr. P.J. Brennan, Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President of the University of Pennsylvania Health Systems, Board Certified in Infectious Disease and Internal Medicine. During the meeting, superintendents learned that case counts are rising in Delaware County with 513 new cases in the week ending July 31st compared to 380 new cases the week before. Case counts are the number of people who are testing positive for COVID-19. These counts include children and adults. We also learned that Haverford Township is among the three areas in the county with the highest positive case counts over the last thirty days.

In addition, we learned that when looking at our public health data, it is critical to review both the daily positive case counts, cumulative cases and counts over 7 and 14 days. Other data points are **also** evaluated, including hospitalizations and deaths. Based on this trajectory, we are still experiencing an upward trend both in our county and region. [CLICK HERE](#) to view an interactive map that helps to show the increases.

Predicting the course of the pandemic is difficult, primarily because it relies on personal responsibility to follow masking and social distancing guidelines, and to obey travel restrictions. These simple steps will accelerate the reduction of positive cases. With so many of our families going on and/or returning from vacations, we believe that these trends will continue, especially when students return to school after the Labor Day holiday.

It is our hope that depopulating our schools for one month will allow for any potential infections brought into our community from holiday travel to lessen before bringing large groups of students and educators into school. The worst scenario would be opening schools only to close them a few days later because of an outbreak. In the meantime, and in collaboration with health officials and experts, we will continue to review public health and medical recommendations for school reopening.

Next Steps

Dr. P.J. Brennan Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President of the University of Pennsylvania Health Systems, Board Certified in Infectious Disease and Internal Medicine will attend the School Board meeting tomorrow night, August 6, 2020. This meeting will begin at 7:00 PM and Dr. Brennan will discuss the county and local data.

You can join the ZOOM School Board Meeting at the link below or watch the livestream on YouTube:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://haverfordsd.zoom.us/j/85004315910>

School Board Meeting live stream on our YouTube Channel here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSe8_yvzOaJmzYUiq3X_gqA

I will recommend the Board vote on changing our reopening plan from a hybrid model to an all virtual model.

We appreciate your understanding and support as we navigate this process together. We remain Haverford Strong.

Sincerely,

Maureen Reusche, Ed.D.