August 17, 2020

Dear William Penn Family:

Over the last week, I have been provided with a myriad of concerns related to teachers coming into the building, how to best support our low incidence population of students, and family concerns regarding their children being educated virtually.

The decisions we are charged with making at this time are not taken lightly; when dealing with the health and safety of students and staff I must follow the lead of the health experts. After meeting and hearing Dr. Brennan, medical expert, spoke to us on August 5, concerns were still evident by some - specifically related to teachers being in their classrooms providing direct instruction to students.

The dialogue continued on August 12 during our Education Committee Meeting. During the meeting, there were mixed reviews. Many teachers raised their objections and some teachers commented that they were glad to go back to the building. Some parents wanted their children to be supported face-to-face; however, a concern was raised by a parent who questioned the level of support their child would receive by someone who does not want to be in the school building.

All of the concerns raised have validity and are not in alignment with each other. This Pandemic is very serious and each of us is operating at different levels of comfort. To address the concerns, and realizing not everyone will be pleased with whichever decision is made, I have decided that teachers will have the option to work in the school building or from home. This will ensure that all of our students will be supported.

Please keep in mind that we will outline expectations for working from home – i.e. connectivity, focus on teaching and learning during the instructional day. When the expectations are not being met individual follow up will occur quickly to address any deficiencies.

Take care and stay safe,

Dr. Eric J. Becoats
Superintendent, William Penn School District

Statement made by Dr. Becoats at the Board Meeting of the Committee of the Whole on Monday, August 17, 2020.