



PARKLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Educating For Success, Inspiring Excellence.

Administration Center

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ParklandSchoolDistrict



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November 6, 2020

Dear Parkland Staff, Parents and Guardians,

The purpose of this message is to notify you of the current level of community transmission for Lehigh County and the potential impact it may have on Parkland School District's Instructional Model.

Today, Friday, November 6, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) released updates to the metrics that are used to determine the level of community transmission in Lehigh County. The *incident rate per 100,000 residents over the previous 7 days* (156.5 = substantial) and *PCR percent positive* metric (7.7 = moderate) continued to categorize Lehigh County's level of community spread as "substantial."

According to the PDE's guidance for [Determining Instructional Models During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), a rating of "substantial" in either metric places the entire county into the "substantial spread" category and recommends Lehigh County schools offer a "full remote learning" model only. However, per PDE, the final decision for the instructional model remains a local decision.

After careful consideration, the Superintendents of School Districts in Lehigh County met and have decided as a group that it is in the best interest of our students, staff, and communities **that we maintain our current instructional model until further notice**. We will continue to monitor the data and reevaluate this decision on a regular basis. **This means that Parkland will continue to operate in its Hybrid model of instruction.**

It is important to recognize that the Lehigh County's *incident rate per 100,000 residents* and *PCR percent positive* are two of many pieces of information that public schools consider in making informed decisions regarding their instructional models and health and safety practices. Lehigh County school districts examine other quantitative measures such as state, county, local, and individual school positive case metrics, in addition to obtaining the latest research and guidance from meetings with our local and state health officials and respective health networks. This comprehensive analysis allows each school district to better understand the data and trends occurring regionally and throughout their respective school communities.

When making our decision to stay the course with our instruction model, the Lehigh County Superintendents discussed the challenges a shift in learning model will create for our students, families, and community at large and balanced this with the fact that we have put into practice many health and safety protocols that are working well in mitigating the spread of any COVID-19 cases that have been reported among our students and staff. This is in part thanks to our staff, students and parents who have been working together to follow face covering and social distancing guidelines and utilize the pre-screening tool before reporting to school. Parkland's contact tracing procedures and the partnership we have developed with the local Department of Health has also been working well to identify and mitigate the virus as has our Hybrid schedule that groups cohorts of students together with days in between cohorts that allow for cleaning and fresh air circulation. Additionally, we, as district leaders, recognize that our districts are not entities unto themselves, but rather interwoven with other school communities whereby the decisions made by one has the potential to create a ripple effect across the region. Maintaining a level of consistency across Lehigh County schools helps to alleviate the negative impact felt by all of our families.

We truly recognize the challenges this pandemic has created for everyone. Please rest assured that our decisions continue to be made with the best interest of our students, staff and community.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Sniscak
Superintendent of Schools
Parkland School District