



# THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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Dear School Leaders,

First, let me thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring that learning in your schools occurs in a healthy and safe manner. Your partnership with the Health Department has been critical and is greatly appreciated.

We began the academic year with a focus on implementing multiple layers of preventive measures to limit COVID-19 exposures and transmission within schools. I am encouraged by what schools have done thus far. Your adherence to these measures have paid off in the early weeks of the academic year. Now, as many schools welcome more students in-person, and as we progress into the cold and flu season, your commitment to the preventive measures will continue to be paramount.

There is no doubt you have seen and heard that our country is experiencing a resurgence of COVID-19. Delaware County is no different. As of today, our incidence is 149.27 cases per 100,000 and our positivity is 6.47% (up from 55.78 and 3.13% from 30 days ago, respectively). These data points continue to be important in reflecting on our progress, and informing future considerations. It is anticipated that this resurgence will continue before it stabilizes again.

At this time, the Chester County Health Department are in support of Delaware County schools continuing in their current instructional model plans while continuing to monitor data against the thresholds. It is also important for schools make a renewed commitment to ensure that all prevention measures are adhered to on a daily basis. While we have cases in schools, the majority of the cases are coming from outside activities. Despite this, we have evidence of in-school transmission when the prevention measures are not being followed. Schools are in a unique position to quickly identify cases, exposures and close contacts, and make timely decisions for sending students and staff home. This results in the spread of the virus being limited once identified.

Throughout our partnership, we have regularly reviewed the incidence and positivity rate against the thresholds in the school guidance. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 in schools and the larger community. When considering changing instructional models, it is important to consider additional information such as the number of COVID-19 cases and/or outbreaks, evidence of

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transmission within schools, staffing levels, adherence to preventive measures, etc. In combination with the thresholds, the additional information is used to assess the best course of action related to instructional models.

We know that in-person learning is vital for our children! Amid the rising cases in our County, it is critical that you reinforce with your communities that individual/family behaviors and choices outside of school have a major impact on our schools' ability to continue with in-person learning. It is also important for schools to consider moving extra-curricular activities online as well as canceling events and gatherings on school property.

These are difficult times, and while we have been experiencing this pandemic since February, it remains a novel virus, and we continue to learn more with time. We have certainly learned a lot since the start of the academic year, and this informs the regular updates to our school guidance.

We will continue to monitor data, learn from you, and update our school guidance when appropriate.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment.

Stay healthy,



Jeanne E. Casner, MPH, PMP  
County Public Health Director