

Pottsville Area School District



July 22, 2020

Safe Reopening Plan Information & Clarification

During PASD’s public board meeting on Tuesday, July 21, 2020, three safe reopening scenarios were presented. Although the plan will not be approved until the August meeting, the Pandemic Planning Team has provisions in place for each option. Additionally, the Educator Technology Subcommittee has been working to align all aspects of remote learning to meet the standards of rigorous classroom instruction. New impacts of COVID-19 are being realized each day, and recently, there is evidence of increasing cases. Committing to a reopening scenario, at this point, would provide our school community with a premature decision, and result in the need for families to make changes to arrangements they have put in place based on the decision.

PASD understands that families need information to make child care arrangements, and has communicated over the past several weeks that families should begin making arrangements based on the strong possibility that students may not be present in the school buildings for some or all days during the week. Below you will find an outline of the three safe reopening scenarios. This is intended to provide you with clarification on the reopening options, and hopefully offer answers to your questions. We encourage you to plan for all three scenarios when considering child care arrangements during the 2020-21 school year.

	Total Reopening	Blended Reopening	Total Remote Learning
What does this look like?	All students will be present for in-person instruction. Families will have the option to select total enhanced remote learning, if they feel this is the best option for their child.	Students will be present for in-person instruction 2 days per week (Monday-Tuesday OR Thursday-Friday), and attend remotely 3 days per week. Families will have the option to elect for total enhanced remote learning, if they feel this is the best option their child.	All students will participate in enhanced remote learning.
How will instruction be delivered?	Students will be present in the classroom for instruction. Students opting for remote learning may participate in live instruction during scheduled class time, or view the recorded lesson by the end of each day.	Approximately half of the students will be present for in-person instruction on their assigned days. The other students will participate via enhanced remote instruction, either in live instruction during scheduled class time, or by viewing the recorded lessons by the end of each day. Students opting for total remote learning will have the same option for live instruction or watching the recorded lesson.	All students will participate in enhanced remote instruction. Live instruction will be offered to mirror students’ schedules. The live lessons will be recorded for students that are not able to attend during live instruction, on the day in which the lesson is delivered.
How will I know when my child should attend in-person instruction?	All students will be present for instruction 5-days per week. Students will be provided with a daily schedule, as they would be during a typical school year. Students participating remotely will attend live instruction via a virtual platform following their regular daily schedule.	Families will be notified by <u>July 30, 2020</u> of their in-person day assignment. Notice of in-person day assignments is <u>not</u> an indication of this being the selected reopening scenario. PASD will assign students to either Monday-Tuesday or Thursday-Friday. Students living in the same household will be assigned to the same in-person instruction days.	If this reopening scenario is determined to be the safest for our students and staff, students will not be present at the school buildings for in-person instruction.

Will my child need to wear a face covering?	Yes. PASD will follow PA DOH’s Universal Face Covering Order and PDE’s guidance. Helpful hints for teaching your child to wear a face covering will be shared by PASD.	Yes. PASD will follow PA DOH’s Universal Face Covering Order and PDE’s guidance. Helpful hints for teaching your child to wear a face covering will be shared by PASD.	Not applicable.
Will there be exceptions to the PASD dress code?	Yes. Students at all grade levels will be afforded a relaxed dress code, including a non-collared shirt (that is school appropriate). Dress code bottoms will still be expected at all grade levels. This is subject to change at any time, and families will be notified if that occurs. Specific information about dress code exceptions will be provided separately.	Yes. Students at all grade levels will be afforded a relaxed dress code, including a non-collared shirt (that is school appropriate). Dress code bottoms will still be expected at all grade levels. This is subject to change at any time, and families will be notified if that occurs. Specific information about dress code exceptions will be provided separately.	Students will be expected to wear appropriate clothing if they will be sharing their camera during live virtual instruction.
How will PASD determine if this is the best reopening option for our district?	The health and safety of all Pottsville Area School District’s students, staff, and community members is our greatest concern. When considering the total reopening option, the Pandemic Planning Team will assess the most current local, state, and federal guidelines for social distancing and safety protocols, as well as changes in COVID-19 within our community, to ensure they can be safely observed in this reopening scenario.	The health and safety of all Pottsville Area School District’s students, staff, and community members is our greatest concern. This option is being considered to support social distancing guidelines and decrease the number of face-to-face interactions between students and staff. PDE (7/16/20) indicated that schools “should implement strategies that limit the number of individuals in classrooms and other learning spaces, and interactions between groups of students.”	The effects of COVID-19 on our school community will be closely monitored. In the event that we are notified by the Schuylkill County Emergency Management Agency, or other public health authority, that there is a rise in cases, or cases that directly impact the function of our schools, this option may be employed. Likewise, Governor Wolf recently indicated that he may need to “pull the plug” on in-person instruction if the surge in COVID-19 cases continues to grow. PASD will abide by any local, state, or federal directives.
Will families be able to choose between full reopen and blended reopen?	No. If PASD determines that blended reopening is necessary to observe health and safety protocols, full in-person instruction will not be an option. As indicated in the above response, blended reopening is being considered to decrease interactions within the school setting. The CDC (5/19/2020) advised “the more people a student or staff member interacts with, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread,” and further shared, if virtual-only classes are not chosen, classes should be small groups and practice social distancing through measures such as hybrid class structures and rotated schedules. The Monday-Tuesday or Thursday-Friday option for our blended model keeps cohorts of students in-person with a day between for deep cleaning and sanitization (as previously stated, in a blended instruction model, ALL students will be required to attend remote learning on Wednesday).		
What if I do not want my child to attend in-person instruction?	PASD will offer enhanced remote learning for any family that determines this is the best option for their child. When families are informed of their assigned days for blended learning, there will be a link to notify the school of your intentions to participate in PASD’s enhanced remote learning instead of an in-person instructional option. Families selecting this option will need to provide notice to the district by August 6, 2020. When a family determines that they would like their child to return to in-person instruction at PASD, notice will need to be provided 2 weeks in advance of return to ensure classroom assignments can meet the recommendations and guidelines for social distancing.		

References:

CDC (2020, May 19), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

PDE (2020, July 16), <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx>