

POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Pottsville Area Families,

The PASD Pandemic Planning Team held its weekly meeting this morning and focused on the safe reopening of our schools for the 2020-21 school year. Our team has made a great deal of progress in planning, and will continue to work until all components meet the rigorous demands of a comprehensive plan for our staff and students to return. The inclusive team is currently working to address each component of the plan, working within district-based areas of expertise: Cleaning and Sanitizing, Social Distancing and Safety Protocols, Monitoring Student and Staff Health, Other Considerations for Students and Staff, and Health and Safety Professional Development. Additionally, subcommittees have been created to specifically focus on and plan for instructional strategies (including technology and virtual learning) and health and safety protocols within each building. The subcommittees will provide the comprehensive planning team with informed decisions to proceed in the planning process.

During today's meeting, our team discussed the most recent order requiring universal face coverings. Given the results from our PASD family surveys, support for students wearing face coverings during the school day demonstrated a vast difference of opinions. This current Order removes the decision from the school district, and requires that face masks be worn when:

- outdoors and unable to consistently maintain a distance of six feet from individuals who are not members of their household;
- in any indoor location where members of the public are generally permitted;
- waiting for and riding on transportation;
- obtaining healthcare services;
- engaged in work, interacting in-person, in common areas, in a room or enclosed area with other people.

This Order applies to the school setting, and must be enforced as long as it is applicable. We recognize that not all members of our school community are in agreement with this requirement. Should the district determine schools will reopen for in-person instruction at the beginning of the school year, we are adequately prepared to offer alternative means of instruction. Specific information is forthcoming regarding PASD remote learning opportunities, aligned with our district curriculum.

The Health and Safety Plan will include options for both in-person and online instruction. PASD recognizes that any of the options may present hardships for some students, families, and community. At this time, no decisions have been finalized, and we will continue to monitor recommendations and guidance from state and federal sources. Please know that our first priority is the health and well-being of our students and staff.

Regular communication will occur to ensure all members of our school community have up-to-date information regarding the safe reopening of schools. As our district plans to reopen for the school year, we recommend that the community plans as well. Please consider preparing for various scenarios, including the potential need for child care due to the possibility of schools being closed. It is also imperative that all students have current contact information on file. In the event that a student becomes symptomatic or is exposed to COVID-19, families will need to have a plan in place for a student to be picked up from school. Parents should contact the school building office to update all necessary information. We hope that this advanced notice of expectations offers all families the opportunity to plan appropriately for such circumstances.

Your continued support and constructive input throughout these unprecedented times are greatly appreciated. We are confident that our Tide family will persevere and grow stronger navigating this path together.

Sincerely,

PASD Pandemic Planning Team