



SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Patrik D. Williams, Superintendent

December 31, 2021

Dear Smyrna School District Families:

I hope this letter finds you all healthy and well. I am sharing it in anticipation of our return to in-person instruction on Monday, January 3rd, 2022. As of the date of this letter, we are preparing for students and staff to return to our schools, offices and buildings bright and early this coming Monday morning. Barring a state order, we have *no intention* of pivoting to virtual instruction now or in the future unless our operational integrity is compromised through:

1. Noncompliance with guidelines from the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and/or Delaware's Division of Public Health (DPH);
2. Rapidly escalating positive testing and close contact quarantining rates beyond our capability to safely manage them;
3. Any other circumstance that drastically inhibits the safe, efficient and continued opening of our schools as they are now.

I would also like to share with you a summary of the current CDC guidance regarding close contact quarantining. The summary is a separate document accompanying this letter. The detailed guidance is available at the following link: <https://news.delaware.gov/2021/12/28/dph-to-implement-updated-cdc-guidance-reducing-quarantine-isolation-periods/>

We join everyone in our collective goal to continue in-person instruction in perpetuity, but to do so we **must** have all staff and families do the following:

- Faithfully follow the research-based protocols contained in the accompanying document titled *Updated CDC & DPH Guidance*. Failure to do so will jeopardize our ability to offer in-person instruction to our students. This is a fact.
- Faithfully apply the accompanying screening tool titled *Updated Parent Screener August 2021* **each and every day** before coming to school. If staff or students ignore this most important daily responsibility to ourselves and to one another, we will not be able to sustain in-person instruction. This a fact.
- Stay home when sick. **No exceptions**. If any of us comes to school when symptomatic or fighting **any** illness, we create a domino effect in which multiple teachers and scores of students will be required to quarantine for at least five days. This is a fact.
- Work together to keep our schools open and safe. This means faithfully wear a well-fitted mask over the mouth **and nose** when in the company of others to avoid spreading disease. Properly worn masks mitigate contagions. This is a fact.

The Smyrna School District does not discriminate in employment, educational programs, services or activities based on race, color, marital status, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or any other protected category or status in accordance with state and federal laws. Inquiries should be directed to the District Superintendent.



- Be patient with our nurses who are legally bound to investigate **all** positive cases and **all** close contacts for possible quarantining. Our nurses are caring medical professionals who must honor their oath to protect all of us. If they call us, we must cooperate fully with their instructions. ***No exceptions.*** We are able to remain open to in-person instruction only as long as they are able to effectively do their jobs. This is a fact.
- Accept personal responsibility for securing a test when necessary, alerting close contacts when exposed or symptomatic and following all requirements if quarantined. Failure to accept personal responsibility for one another will spread the virus. This is a fact.

Finally, as we embark on a new calendar year with anticipation, excitement and promise, we continue to resolve to do our best to provide a safe, healthy and positive learning environment for every student. We will be able to do this for your children only if you join us in this commitment.

Sincerely,

Patrik Williams
Superintendent

Attached Documents:

Updated CDC & DPH Guidance
Updated Parent Screener August 2021