

SOUTH ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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August 7, 2020

Dear South Allegheny Family,

The decision on reopening has been one that has weighed heavily on all of our minds. With guidance received from the health officials and the Pennsylvania Department of Education which includes terms such as “recommended” and “to the greatest extent possible”, school district leaders across the state realized quickly that what is being done next door does not, and cannot work for their own Districts. Right now, our primary focus is and will continue to be, doing our absolute best to provide a safe and healthy environment for our students, faculty and staff who make up our South Allegheny Family. We must focus on virus mitigation and spread and continually plan and reevaluate, making adaptations where necessary that focus on our core principle of providing safety and well being for our school community. Additionally, we, as a District, are far better prepared to provide a quality education due to the amount of planning, the implementation of a learning management system, and the purchase of technology to ensure that quality instruction is taking place K-12 no matter what phase the virus dictates.

With all of this being considered, along with how the virus has been ever changing locally and within the county, the Board of Directors supports the South Allegheny School District moving forward with a phased approach to bringing students back. This means that students will begin their school year on August 24th in a completely distance learning environment. We will bring in all adults first, monitor how that is working, ask our adults to double check the plans we have in place for the health and safety of all involved, and also allow them to become completely confident in their delivery of instruction to your students in a virtual environment.

After analysis of this initial process of bringing adults back into the District is successful, we will enter into the next step of this phased approach bringing in our students one borough at a time, once a week. We need to do this slowly, once again monitoring our plans once we add students, ensuring that what we have written on paper in a plan actually works with 5-18 year olds. When we enter this step into our phased approach, we will have students from Liberty Borough attend on Monday, Port Vue attend on Tuesday, Glassport on Wednesday, Lincoln on Thursday, and all students will be learning remotely on Fridays. We will monitor and adjust as necessary, but if things go well, and we are able to manage this safely for a period of time, we will then move to our full “SA Yellow” Phase as described in previous communications.

Although I hope that these transitions through phases could be complete sometime in the first grading period, this plan is extremely fluid and can change at any time based on our status as a District, as well as any mandates passed down by county or state officials. Throughout all of this time, as we phase into reopening our schools as safely as possible, we

will continue to communicate with you, and as always, please feel free to reach out to your building administrators at any time.

The most difficult part of this decision is realizing that this announcement will have very mixed reactions. Some families will be happy with the decision to step slowly into our schools reopening and others may not feel the same. Please know that we understand your feelings, and there is truly no one way to do this and make everyone happy. One thing I do know is that your child will continue to receive a rigorous and relevant education regardless of the mode of delivery. That is our goal as a District, and one we will continue to work tirelessly to attain.

Educationally, I am thrilled to become a 1:1 District, as the infusion of technology into the delivery of instruction for our students opens doors never possible before. Faculty will receive Professional Development during the week of August 17th on best practices in technology integration at all grade levels, and I truly believe that this will enable our students to better prepare for their futures beyond South Allegheny in a way that could not be done before.

I also would like to thank all involved in the planning process regarding the reopening of our schools. Their tireless efforts to provide our students with a safe and healthy learning environment has been outstanding.

Please know that additional information will be forthcoming, regarding a variety of pertinent information for you and your child, prior to August 24th.

Thank you for your continued support of the South Allegheny School District as we continue to work through these very challenging times.

Sincerely,
Dr. Lisa N. Duval
Superintendent