



South Park School District

October 27, 2020

South Park School District Families:

As we near the end of the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year, the South Park School District continues to evaluate our education plan as well as the public health metrics for our township, county and state. We also continue to rely on guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Health as it pertains to any changes to our operational structure. Based on the guidance from the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Health detailed below, the South Park School District is delaying a transition to full in-person learning and will remain under a hybrid model for the start of the second quarter which begins on Thursday, November 12. We understand this may cause frustration or hardship. However, as we have indicated since the summer, we will depend on the advice of our state's public health and education leaders. We will, however, make several modifications to our hybrid model for the second quarter.

The primary, metrics-based resource we use is the [state's instructional model recommendations](#) we shared with families in August. This guidance, developed by the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Health and using measurements from the White House Coronavirus Task Force, categorizes the level of community transmission into three categories (low, moderate or substantial) based on a county's incidence rate per 100,000 residents in the most recent seven days and/or a county's PCR percent positivity in the most recent seven days. These two metrics can be accessed on the state's [Early Warning Monitoring System Dashboard](#), and they are updated every Friday.

State experts recommend a hybrid or full remote instructional model when a county's level of community transmission is categorized as moderate (an incidence rate of 10 to <100 per 100,000 residents **OR** a PCR percent positivity rate of 5% to <10%) to maximize physical distancing in school buildings. State experts recommend a full in-person or hybrid instructional model when a county's level of community transmission is categorized as low (an incidence rate of <10 per 100,000 residents **AND** a PCR percent positivity rate of <5%). State experts recommend a full remote instructional model when a county's level of community transmission is categorized as substantial (an incidence rate of 100 or more per 100,000 residents **OR** a PCR percent positivity rate of 10% or more).

Allegheny County's level of community transmission has remained at the moderate level since the beginning of the school year. In fact, in recent weeks, the county's incidence rate per 100,000 residents and PCR percent positivity rate have both increased. For the most recent seven-day period, the county's incidence rate per 100,000 residents was 56.1 and the PCR percent positivity rate was 3.6%. With an incidence rate per 100,000 residents of 56.1, the county remains at the moderate level. Last week in South Park Township, the percent positivity rate was 9.4%.



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While we will remain in the hybrid model for the start of the second quarter, we will make several modifications to the hybrid model. Based on feedback from families and teachers, South Park educators are developing plans that will incorporate additional recorded instruction, live instruction and/or recorded instructional support when students are learning from home beginning on Monday, November 16. As effective instructional techniques vary by grade-level, our school principals will be working with their teachers to create models that will best serve students throughout the district while meeting their unique learning needs. A waiver by the Pennsylvania Department of Education last summer allowed districts to count at-home learning days towards the mandated 180-instructional-day requirement. Therefore, on at-home learning days, students are required to record attendance, complete assigned work or participate as they would on days when they are attending classes in school. Teachers will continue to use Fridays when both hybrid groups are learning from home for small group work or individual support.

Please continue to use our new learning management platform, Canvas, to stay connected with your child's classes. If you have not created a parent (observer) account in Canvas, [click here](#) for instructions. Our principals and teachers will use upcoming professional development time to prepare for this change to our hybrid model. Teachers will be sharing their second quarter learning plans with their students and families in the coming weeks.

The district has created [this second quarter hybrid calendar](#) for the remainder of November and December so that families can make any necessary adjustments should the hybrid model continue up to the winter break. With more scheduled off-days for students in the coming months, there are several modifications to the normal hybrid schedule, so please review the calendar carefully. Our goal has been and remains to be a full-return of our students to in-person learning while meeting state public health and educational guidelines as well as mandates from the Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Education.

As always, thank you for your patience, partnership, support and feedback. We will remain ready to make adjustments to our operational plan to ensure our students continue to learn in a safe and healthy school environment. We will continue to provide updates to families as we actively plan for the return of full in-person learning in South Park schools. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, school counselor, principal or me.

Sincerely,

Wayne P. Gdovic
Superintendent of Schools
South Park School District