

# Shaler Area School District

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Director of Business Affairs

November 16, 2020

Dear Shaler Area families,

Since we have moved to the hybrid model on October 12<sup>th</sup>, our staff and students have done a tremendous job of adhering to the PA Department of Health guidelines and have minimized the risk of transmission to our students and staff within our schools. Because of our compliance with the health guidelines, our confirmed positive COVID-19 cases within the district are extremely low. However, Allegheny County, surrounding counties, and the state of Pennsylvania have experienced a surge in COVID-19 cases last week. Due to this significant increase in positive cases, the PA Department of Health has shifted Allegheny County into the "Substantial" category of community transmission as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

This **substantial** designation has caused concern with all of us, and we are evaluating the situation closely and will continue to partner with the Allegheny County Health Department to ensure that we make the right decision for our students and staff of the Shaler Area School District. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has communicated that two consecutive weeks of a "substantial" designation would warrant a recommended shift to 100% virtual learning. *At this time, the county is in week one of substantial designation, and we plan to remain in hybrid this week, but we recognize that a change to a virtual learning scenario may be inevitable if another substantial designation comes this Friday.* Although there are many distractions all around us, we will remain focused on keeping our students and staff safe and learning while in our care this week.

As we receive information and make decisions for our district, we will be sure to communicate with all of you in a timely manner. This entire situation with COVID-19 has been a bit of a moving target, and we remain committed to effective and timely communication as well as ensuring the safety and security of our students and staff. In preparation for a potential move to virtual instruction, our teachers will be preparing our students with materials and any other information they may need for that scenario.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Shaler Area School District during this uncertain and ever-changing pandemic. Also, thank you for using good judgment at home to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 here in our schools. We are in this together, and we are stronger together.

Sincerely,

Mr. Sean C. Aiken  
Superintendent of Schools