

Shaler Area School District

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Dear Shaler Area families,

We want to start off by thanking you for your support as we transitioned back to hybrid instruction this week. We are so happy to have students back in our schools. Please note that included in this communication is:

- A summary of COVID-19 cases in SASD for the week of Jan. 18;
- Information about additional money available to families who qualify for free or reduced-price meals; and
- Social and emotional health resources available to families and students.

COVID-19 Summary

We appreciate our students, staff, and families' commitment to our health and safety protocols and hope our combined efforts will keep our COVID-19 case numbers low and our schools open. Following trends in other school districts and the county, we have seen some positive COVID-19 cases within our school district this week. Below is a summary of those cases as of Friday morning:

- One student at Burchfield Primary tested positive on Jan. 20.
- One staff member at Shaler Area Elementary tested positive on Jan. 20.

The district, in partnership with the Allegheny County Health Department, has identified and notified any individuals who have been identified as a close contact. To track the positive cases in each school building over a 14-day period please visit our district's COVID-19 dashboard: <https://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/COVID-19Dashboard.aspx>. If a school experiences a positive COVID-19 case, we will continue to send an email to all families and staff members of the affected building.

Additional Benefits for Families Who Qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Meals

Congress recently passed COVID-19 relief packages that contain benefits for families financially impacted by the pandemic. Some of these benefits are available to students who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

Funding for the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) has been extended through the end of September 2021. Through P-EBT, eligible school children receive temporary emergency nutrition benefits loaded on EBT cards to purchase food outside of school.

If you believe your school-aged child(ren) may qualify for free or reduced-price meals this school year, and you have not yet submitted the application for free or reduced-price meals to the school, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. The application then will be used to determine which additional benefits your child(ren) and/or household may be eligible to receive.

The online application is located at www.compass.state.pa.us. If you have already applied for the 2020-21 school year, you do not need to apply again. If you need help filling out the application or would like a paper application, please contact your building's social worker. A list of the building social workers is available at: <https://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/PupilPersonnelServices.aspx>.

Social and Emotional Needs of Students

We recognize the social and emotional toll of this pandemic has an effect on our students and families. In addition to the supports in each building provided by our teachers and Student Services staff, we have an extended list of resources available on our Support Services Google Sites page that you can access by clicking on this link: <https://sites.google.com/shaler.us/k-12-school-services/family-resources?authuser=0>

Some of the topics on the page are listed below and also can be accessed by clicking on the title:

- [Virtual Calming Room](#)
- [Counseling and Crisis Resources](#)
- [Child Care](#)
- [COVID Resources](#)
- [Educational Resources](#)
- [Food and Free Lunch Resources](#)
- [Grief](#)
- [Health Insurance Resources](#)
- [Homeless- McKinney Vento](#)
- [Internet](#)
- [Kindergarten](#)
- [Vaping/Smoking Resources](#)
- [Suicide](#)
- [Technology](#)

We ask that if you have any concerns about your student, please reach out to your student's teachers, school counselor, building social worker, and/or building principal. Our staff is continuing to gather and provide additional resources in order to help with the social and emotional wellness of all our students and families. Thank you again for being our partners in education as we navigate an ever-changing situation and unique school year.

Sincerely,

Sean C. Aiken, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

Bryan E. O'Black, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent