

# Shaler Area School District

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January 29, 2021

Dear Shaler Area families,

Thank you for your support in another successful week of hybrid instruction. Please note that included in this communication is:

- A summary of COVID-19 cases in SASD for the week of Jan. 25;
- A request to complete a survey regarding possible changes to the instruction models;
- Inclement weather plans for this year;
- Social and emotional resources available to students and families.

## COVID-19 Summary

In a continued effort to better communicate how the pandemic is affecting the district, below is a summary of the additional positive COVID-19 cases added this week as of Friday morning:

- Two students at Shaler Area High School tested positive on Jan. 25.
- One student at Shaler Area Elementary tested positive on Jan. 26.

The district, in partnership with the Allegheny County Health Department, has identified and notified any individuals who have been identified as a close contact. 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 and update our district's COVID-19 dashboard: <https://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/COVID-19Dashboard.aspx>.

## Parent Survey

As we continue to evaluate our instruction models, we are asking our families to fill out the survey in the link below. We will use the information gathered from the survey to help guide us when considering modifications to our instructional planning.

Now that we have transitioned to hybrid instruction and seen success in limiting the positive case numbers in our buildings, we are looking at the possibility of increasing the number of in-person instruction days and what that would look like at each grade level. As of right now, we are considering increasing in-person instruction days to four days per week (M, Tu, Th, F). This would allow us to maintain our current mitigation strategies of additional cleaning on Wednesdays and provide our teaching staff with dedicated time during the week to support students in Cohort C.

If the district opts to transition to 4-day per week in-person instruction (M, Tu, Th, F), it would do so under the following parameters:

- Students and staff will be required to continue to adhere to the universal face masking order as outlined by the PA Department of Health.
- Physical distancing of six feet in school cafeterias remains a requirement in order for students to remove their face coverings.
- Physical distancing in our classrooms will be reduced to less than six feet.

While the district will maintain six feet of physical distance between individuals to the highest extent possible, the district will be unable to accommodate six feet of physical distance in all scenarios. It is important to note

that reducing the physical distance may result in an increase in the number of close contacts identified should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed in a classroom setting because close contacts are generally individuals within six feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more. Additionally, if the district increases the number of in-person instruction days, the capacity limits on school bus routes will need to increase. This means that students will once again share seats. Up to two students may share a seat on a school bus. Up to three primary/elementary-aged siblings may share a seat on a school bus.

Please complete one survey for each child enrolled in the district by Friday, February 5:

<https://forms.gle/KY5qWEPHE2L2tedF7>.

### **Inclement Weather Plans**

In looking ahead to next week's forecast, we want to remind you of the district's inclement weather process for this year.

- In the event of inclement weather, a two-hour delay schedule may be used on in-person instruction days. Students who are scheduled to attend in person will report to school, students who are scheduled for virtual instruction will log on following the two-hour delay schedule.

#### **Two-Hour Delay student start times:**

- Primary Schools: 11 a.m.
  - Shaler Area Elementary: 10:12 a.m.
  - Shaler Area Middle School: 9:40 a.m.
  - Shaler Area High School: 9:18 a.m.
- If it is necessary to cancel in-person classes, all students will participate in virtual instruction on that day.

The decision to delay or cancel school will be made whenever possible before 6 a.m. and if possible, the night before. However, there are occasions that changing road and weather conditions will necessitate a later decision. More information about our inclement weather plans and notification is available on our Back-to-School webpage: <https://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/BacktoSchool2020.aspx>

### **Social and Emotional Needs of Students**

Please remember that if your student or family is struggling with the emotional toll of this pandemic, we are here to help. 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. Additionally, we have an extended list of resources available on our Support Services Google Sites page that you can access from home by clicking on this link:

<https://sites.google.com/shaler.us/k-12-school-services/family-resources?authuser=0>

As always, thank you for your support as we navigate this unusual school year together.

Sincerely,

Sean C. Aiken, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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