

Shaler Area School District

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December 4, 2020

Dear Shaler Area families,

We hope you were able to enjoy a safe and relaxing Thanksgiving break with your household. A lot has happened since we announced that Shaler Area would transition to the virtual instruction model through December 11, and we want to provide an update on the new state requirements and the district's plans to safely educate our students.

On Friday, November 20, Allegheny County experienced its second consecutive week of "substantial" transmission. As we had shared previously, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Education (PDE) recommend full remote learning for all schools in counties with a substantial level of community transmission. On Tuesday, November 23, the Secretary of Health issued a new order requiring public schools in counties with substantial community transmission to attest to health and safety protocols. As a district, we signed the [Attestation Ensuring Implementation of Mitigation Efforts](#) form declaring that the district has transitioned to a fully remote learning model, and we will continue to evaluate our instruction model in accordance with the DOH and PDE guidance to determine when it is safest to resume in-person instruction.

Virtual Instruction

We had planned to resume in-person instruction the week of December 14, however with the increasing number of positive case counts occurring in our community and county, it appears Allegheny County will continue to experience "substantial" transmission. Based on the recommendations from state health officials and with consideration for the safety of our students and staff, we are making the difficult decision to **continue virtual instruction through the month of December** and winter break.

We will tentatively return to hybrid instruction on **Monday, January 4, for Cohort A** and **Thursday, January 7, 2021 for Cohort B**. This transition schedule is subject to change based on recommendations from the county and state officials and the COVID-19 community transmission rate within our county. We will continue to track the data and provide regular communication with any additional information or updates as conditions necessitate.

District Resources

We miss having our students in our schools, but please remember that there are many school resources available to you and your family during virtual instruction.

The grab-n-go breakfast and lunch program will continue to provide meals for students while the district is in the 100% virtual model at three pick-up locations.

- Shaler Area High School (main entrance at the front of the building) from 11 a.m. to noon
- Christ Lutheran Church, in Millvale, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran Church, in Etna, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

To participate in this program, complete the google form by [clicking here](#). Meals will be provided Monday through Friday. Saturday and Sunday's meals will be provided on Friday.

Additionally, our school counselors have a variety of resources available for families on the district counseling [website](#) and are available to address any student-specific concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's [school counselor](#) directly.

We know this is a challenging time for our students and families, and we encourage you to take advantage of the free resources available. We hope that you and your family remain safe and healthy this month.

Sincerely,

Sean C. Aiken
Superintendent of Schools

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