



June 4, 2020

Dear Southern Lehigh Families,

As this year draws to a close, I would like to thank you all for your support and flexibility during this difficult time. We miss our students and staff, and would love nothing more than to have everyone back with us as soon as we can.

At this time, our attention continues to focus on planning for the fall. We know that nothing replaces face to face instruction. Our staff are missing students and can't wait to restore daily contact. I know our students have struggled with not being able to connect with the adults in school and with their peers. We know that students are struggling with lack of social engagement and time with their friends. We are also sensitive to the needs of our families to return to work, and recognize that child care is a significant issue for many. However, we continue to focus on the health and wellbeing of all students and staff, and must follow guidance that is in place at the time. Yesterday, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) released the first phase in their guidance for the reopening of school buildings. Further guidance for schools will be released by PDE towards the end of June.

We are planning a continuum of options that we can quickly implement as guidance changes or more information becomes available. We simply cannot know exactly what fall will look like at this stage, as restrictions and guidance will undoubtedly change several times over the next couple of months. We do know that we need to move forward with plans despite the current lack of clear information about where we will be by that stage. Our approach is to create a range of plans that can be implemented depending on circumstances that unfold over the summer. The fact that we are creating a range of plans does not mean that we intend to ultimately implement all plans. The plans are alternatives depending on the health situation and restrictions in place at the time school resumes in late August. Whatever plan we implement, it will be important that we ensure rigorous instruction that is standards aligned, and that covers the content necessary to keep students on track. We will make our final decisions based on the range of data, input from staff and community, and the regulations and guidance from the governor's office, CDC, PA Department of Health, and PA Department of Education.

For the first phase of our community input, I am requesting that you complete a survey that allows you to provide input regarding the recent e-learning experience and share ideas for the upcoming 2020-2021 School Year. This survey will be used to gather information to be used in our planning of the continuum of teaching and learning for the fall. We ask that you return this survey by **Wednesday, June 10th** to allow ample time to complete our initial planning and share further information with you.

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The survey is designed to give input for each individual student as we recognize that within the same family, each student may need something different to successfully navigate learning in the fall. While it may seem repetitive, we suggest that you fill out a survey for each child since the needs of each student vary greatly. Having responses separately for each child will help planning at the individual grade levels to ensure all student needs are met in a developmentally appropriate manner.

In the survey you will see reference to 'District Digital Academy'. This refers to our eLearn21 program. This is a program that has run for several years as an online alternative to traditional school attendance and learning. eLearn21 is a collaborative effort between the Southern Lehigh School District and Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit to provide new learning options for students. eLearn21's web-based courses meet the increasing demand for high quality student instruction that incorporates proven online learning practices and next generation software.

I truly appreciate the dedication of our students, families, staff, administrators and school board as we navigate these challenges. The academic, social, emotional, health and safety needs of our students, staff and families remain our top priority, and we are focused on doing the best for Southern Lehigh given the circumstances we are operating under.

Please participate in the [2020-2021 Planning Survey](#) to make sure your voices are heard as we move forward. If you have any questions or need clarification as you are completing the survey, please contact info@slsd.org for assistance.

We will continue to send updates throughout the next few weeks as plans are refined and guidance solidified, and will continue to seek your input as we move forward. We wish all our students and families a healthy and happy summer. Special congratulations to our Class of 2020 for your many achievements. We wish you all the best as you continue in your journey.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
SUPERINTENDENT