

September 2, 2021

SLSD Parents/Guardians and Staff,

Thank you to all of our students and staff who came together for a very successful first week of the 2021-2022 school year. Each of our buildings are alive with the sights and sounds of school and it is wonderful to witness our students and staff engage and interact as they work to establish the bonds that will be the foundation for an amazing school year. Further, we hope that all of the members of the SLSD community are healthy and safe following the significant rainfall that our region experienced over the last 24 hours. Weather patterns that affect school always present operational challenges, and the timing of this storm coupled with the opening week of school required a serious review of the regional road conditions. Thankfully we were able to operate with minor adjustments while still ensuring a complete first week of school. As a school community, we look forward to the opportunity that lies ahead as we continue to grow alongside one another this school year. Outlined below are some additional updates;

- **Commonwealth Masking Order** - On Tuesday, August 31st the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted an [Order of the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Directing Face Coverings in School Entities](#). This order requires that all students and staff in the K-12 setting wear a mask. This goes into effect at 12:01 on September 7th. Because Southern Lehigh's Health and Safety Plan already required that our students and staff wear masks while indoors, the order will not significantly alter our daily routines. As a reminder, any visitors for an event or meeting are expected to wear a mask, as required by the order. Masks are not required when students, staff, or visitors are outdoors. Additional information including [frequently asked questions](#), are available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website.
- **Masking Exemption Procedure** - An overview of the SLSD procedure that a parent/guardian requesting a mask exemption for a medical or disability-based accommodation can be found on the [Mask Exemption Procedure Page](#) of the SLSD COVID-19 Resources.
- **Construction Project Workshop Update** - The Southern Lehigh School District Board of School Directors met on Monday August 30 to review and discuss planning related to various associated SLSD construction projects. The presentation from this meeting can be accessed using the following [link](#).
- **SLSD Tiered Student Supports** - The SLSD continues to utilize a Tiered Framework for Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health Supports for all students. A summary of the Tiered Student Supports can be accessed via the following [link](#). Families seeking additional information about available supports should contact their School Counselor.
- **Free Student Lunches** - Reminder, all SLSD students are eligible for free lunch this school year regardless of eligibility. Additional information about the SLSD School Lunch Program can be found using the following [link](#).

- **COVID-19 Case Communication Update** - Please note that the SLSD has updated how COVID-19 Cases Communications will be disseminated for the 2021-2022 school year. This change is being made in an effort to reduce the overall volume of communications sent within the Blackboard Connect System which will help to ensure that this system is being used as intended.
 - **Positive Case Communication** - Positive Case Communications will be posted on the SLSD Website under the News Tab and on [21-22 COVID-19 Case Communications Page](#) of the SLSD COVID-19 Resources. Additionally, a Blackboard Connect Message will be sent to the affected building recipients only.
 - **Close Contact Communication** - Any individual who is deemed a close contact will receive a separate communication from the SLSD to denote that the individual has been deemed a close contact. Additional information about how an individual would be deemed a close contact can be found using the following [link](#).
 - **COVID-19 Case Dashboard** - The SLSD will continue to update the following [COVID-19 Case Dashboard](#) pages in an effort to ensure that interested individuals can track cases occurring within the district.
- **COVID-19 Testing Resources** - The SLSD is currently reviewing the Commonwealth's school based COVID-19 pool testing program. The following information ([Press Release](#) & [Summary Presentation](#)) was presented at the August 23 Board of School Directors Meeting. A representative from Concentric by Ginkgo will be attending the September 13 Board Meeting to answer questions about the program. In the meantime, community COVID-19 testing resources are available at both of our local health networks. Additional information about those resources can be found using the following links.
 - [St. Luke's University Health Network](#)
 - [Lehigh Valley Health Network](#)
- **Daily Health Screener** - We continue to ask that all students and staff complete the [Daily Health Screener](#) each day before school. Anyone who is demonstrating [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should follow the guidance on the screener and **NOT** report to school. Staying home from school/work when we are demonstrating symptoms related to COVID-19 is a critical step in helping to ensure that all students and staff are safe while at school.
- **SLSD COVID-19 Resources Webpage** - The SLSD maintains the [COVID-19 Resources Webpage](#) in an effort to provide up-to-date information to the SLSD school community about a variety of COVID-19 topics.
- **SLSD Substitute Staff Openings** - Like many employers, public schools continue to see a significant deficit of interested candidates to support day-to-day operations. The SLSD is in need of various substitute staff members for the 2021-2022 school year. There are openings for Substitute Custodians, Substitute Food Services Workers, Substitute Instructional Assistants, Substitute School Nurses, and Substitute Teachers. More information, including the related applications can be found via the following [link](#).

- **Upcoming Dates** - Please accept this as a reminder of the following important upcoming dates;
 - **Labor Day Holiday** - Students and staff do not report to school on September 3 & September 6 in observance of Labor Day.
 - **Parent/Guardian Open House** - Dates are available via the following [link](#). More specific details will be shared by building level administration.
 - **Professional Learning Day** - Students do not report to school on October 11th. This is a staff Professional Learning Day.

Respectfully,

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