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November 13, 2020

SLSD Parents and Guardians,

As many of you are aware, the number of cases of COVID-19 has been rising locally, statewide, and nationally. Today I write to share several important developments related to the pandemic and the Southern Lehigh instructional model. First, the COVID-19 numbers reported last week by the Pennsylvania Department of Health remain in the substantial category and continue to meet the PDE and DOH recommended threshold for remote instruction. Second, medical staff from the St. Luke's University Health Network attended the School Board Workshop on Monday to share an update on the current COVID-19 trends in the region and discuss the prospect of continued operation of the Hybrid Instructional Model. Following that presentation, the SLSD Board of School Directors voted to amend the District Health and Safety Plan to allow for the continuation of in-person instruction during the substantial phase. The District will continue to analyze a litany of data related to COVID-19 positive cases including county, school building, and zip code data while continuing to discuss regional trends with medical staff from our local hospital systems.

- **Hybrid Shift Schedule** - As it is currently constructed, the Hybrid Schedule has a disproportionate number of days where in-person instruction for students with the **Last Name A-L** is reduced due to instruction not occurring on Monday's during a holiday break. In an effort to mitigate this inequity, the SLSD will shift in-person instruction during weeks where school buildings are closed on a holiday Monday. The dates listed below **WILL NOW** have in-person instruction for students with last name A-L and remote learning for students with last name M-Z. Additional changes may be made in the future.
 - Friday December 4
 - Friday January 22

- **COVID-19 Dashboard** - SLSD will continue to communicate COVID-19 cases in school buildings via Blackboard, the SLSD Website, and via District Social Media Accounts. Additionally, the District has implemented a COVID-19 Case Dashboard to visually reflect confirmed, positive COVID-19 cases. In addition to continuing to consult with your healthcare provider, please **ENSURE** that you are contacting your child's school nurse if your child meets **ANY** of the following criteria:
 - Is being tested for COVID-19
 - Displays symptoms of COVID-19
 - Is told by a health authority that they need to quarantine
 - Tests positive for COVID-19
 - Additionally, please contact your school nurse if you have any questions related to COVID-19 and your children.



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- **School Break Travel Advisories** - The SLSD recognizes that families may choose to travel during the upcoming school breaks. Currently, the Pennsylvania DOH recommends that individuals quarantine for 14 days following travel to any state or country on the restricted travel lists. While these lists fluctuate, there are currently 34 states that are on the PA DOH's travel advisory list. Please be aware that while the adjacent states of New Jersey, West Virginia and Ohio are not on Pennsylvania's restricted list, the DOH is highly discouraging non-essential travel to these states at this time. You can check the list of [Restricted States](#) and [Countries](#). Students who travel to the areas outlined on these lists will be required to attend school virtually while completing the recommended quarantine period. Additional COVID-19 related travel information can be found via the following links.
 - [Center for Disease Control and Prevention Travel Information](#)
 - [Pennsylvania Department of Health Travel Information](#)
- **Instructional Model Survey's** - Any family that has not completed the SLSD Instructional Model Survey should complete an entry for each student they have enrolled in the Southern Lehigh School District by Sunday, November 15th. As a reminder, this data is being gathered to guide future instructional model decisions.
 - [Kindergarten Instructional Model Survey](#)
 - [Grades 1 - 12 Instructional Model Survey](#)

The Southern Lehigh School District appreciates the overwhelming support of the District's mitigation strategies. While we collectively hope that the trajectory of the pandemic bends toward keeping schools open for as long as possible we must all remain prepared that COVID-19 cases may force the temporary closure of school buildings. As a school community we must continue to work together to take collective steps to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19. Each person in our school community can take individual actions, such as practicing social distancing, wearing a face mask, and avoiding large gatherings. Combined, these mitigation strategies will help keep our schools safe. Although these actions feel like sacrifices they are the bedrock of our continued ability to remain in school for in-person learning.

Kathleen Evison
Superintendent of Schools