

April 9, 2021

Dear T/E Families,

I hope everyone had an enjoyable and safe spring break. I would like to provide updates on Wednesday in-person instruction, a calendar modification, an upcoming interest survey, and COVID-19 trends as we close the first week back to school after break.

Wednesday In-Person Instruction: Elementary and Middle School Phase-In

Last night the TESD Education Committee approved an instructional model modification that will carry us through to the end of this unpredictable year. We gathered information from staff, students, and parents about how our current model of 4 days of in-person instruction with all virtual instruction taking place on Wednesdays could look after April 19. I understand that developing a schedule that meets all the needs of nearly 7,000 students and the professional recommendations of 1,000 staff members is daunting to say the least, and some of you may wish to see a different outcome. Taking this into account, as well as preset calendar days, mandated state instructional hours, standardized testing requirements, and end-of-year school activities and events, the plan will look like this:

- The weeks of April 19 and April 26 will continue with the current model of in-person instruction 4 days/week and all virtual Wednesdays at all levels.
- Wednesday, April 28 will now be a full day of asynchronous, virtual instruction at the elementary level.
- Beginning the week of May 3, elementary instruction will occur in person 5 days/week. May 5 will be the first in-person instructional Wednesday for elementary students.
- Beginning the week of May 17, middle school instruction will occur in person 5 days/week. May 19 will be the first in-person instructional Wednesday for middle school students.
- June 8-11 will be set aside for PSSA (grades 3-8) and Keystone exam testing (CHS). Instruction will take place for students who are not involved in this testing.

The [Wednesday survey results and presentation slides from the Education Committee meeting](#) are available on the TESD website. Principals will share more school-based information in the coming weeks. As always, this schedule is subject to change based on pandemic conditions.

In addition to the plan for Wednesdays, the Education Committee approved a modification to the 2020-2021 calendar. **The last student day has been changed to a full instructional day on Friday, June 11.** The half-day previously scheduled for students on Monday, June 14 will be converted to a full inservice day for professional staff.

Planning for 2021-2022: Interest Survey on Virtual Instructional Model

TESD is actively planning for the 2021-2022 school year. As we have shared, we plan to offer 5 days of in-person instruction next year unless there is a significant negative change in pandemic conditions. Some families have already expressed interest in a virtual instructional option for the upcoming school year. Next week we will be sending an interest survey to all TESD families to get a sense of how many families are interested in pursuing this format. Please watch your inbox for this interest survey.

COVID-19 Trends and Impact on the Instructional Model

Earlier this week, TESD posted a COVID-19 update on the District website. The last two weeks of COVID-19 incidence and positivity rates in Chester County have been in the Very High level of transmission. If data released later today continues to reflect this trend, it will mark the third consecutive week in the Very High category. TESD has been in consultation with the Chester County Health Department (CCHD) for guidance on our instructional model in light of rising COVID-19 numbers. Based on the current data, the CCHD has advised that we may continue with our current instructional model provided that (1) all other health and safety measures remain practiced and enforced and (2) the level of in-school transmission remains very low.

We will continue to consult with the CCHD while monitoring pandemic conditions, and we will provide updates to the school community when there is new information to share. Depending on specific cases within the District, it is possible that individuals, classrooms or entire schools may need to quarantine as directed by the CCHD. It is our hope that we are able to continue in-person instruction through the end of the school year. We need the assistance of the entire community with following COVID-safe protocols in school and out of school to make that happen.

Please watch for additional communication from the schools in the coming weeks regarding schedules, testing information, end of year activities and other details. As always, thank you for your feedback, engagement and partnership during this dynamic year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Gusick
Superintendent of Schools