

January 25, 2021

Dear WCASD Community,

As we move into 2021, I know we all have many questions and concerns about what the second half of this year will bring. We want to share a few important updates. This continues to be an incredibly challenging year, and we appreciate your patience, positivity, and willingness to come together as a school district community to support our students and staff.

1. What does a vaccine mean for our schools, and when will we get doses? While we continue to seek answers from various levels of government health officials and experts, we are very hopeful that they will tell us that once our staff is vaccinated, it will be recommended that we can return students to school at reduced social distancing. Educators are category 1B, which is the next round of vaccines. However, PA is experiencing widespread distribution issues. We do not have a date yet for when the majority of our staff will have access to the vaccine. Currently, our nurses and staff who are working one-on-one with students identified with a disability have received or are on the list to receive the vaccine as part of the 1A group.

2. We are holding two virtual parent information sessions on the following evenings through the WCASD YouTube Channel:

Wednesday, February 10 - 6 p.m. - Elementary Schools (K - 5)

Thursday, February 11 - 6 p.m. - Secondary Schools (6 - 12)

Each info session will be very similar, with a focus slightly geared toward elementary or secondary on corresponding dates. However, each session is open to parents at any level.

Submit questions in advance for the February 10 [Elementary session \(K-5\) here.](#)

Submit questions in advance for the February 11 [Secondary session \(6-12\) here.](#)

We will also be taking questions live via Google Forms during each session. We will post the links to the Google Form and sessions [on our website](#) the morning of each presentation. We will also post a summary of the sessions on our website later in the week.

As always, if you have any specific questions, please email your child's principal or any administrator at this [link](#). We have seen a growing trend of parents asking questions on social media, and we want to assure you that we are always willing and available to answer questions. While we may not always have the answer, we will do our very best to respond promptly and get you the information you need.

3. What kinds of new educational interventions are we putting in place to assist students through this extremely difficult school year?

- In coordination with our teaching staff, we are developing an extensive summer learning program that will offer various levels of in-person and online instruction designed to help students who may be struggling, with a focus on math and reading. This will be different

than our traditional summer school program. It will be offered at no charge and involve a mixture of small group tutoring and more traditional classes. Our goal is to offer as much in-person support as possible. Information will be sent to parents in early March.

- Nearly 3,400 of our 12,000 students have chosen to remain in remote learning until March 31. We want to ensure we are maximizing all of the space in our schools, given the guidance of 6 feet of social distancing. An instructional team at each school continues to review student data and is contacting parents to offer four day a week, in-person seats to students who our team feels are in the greatest need of in-person instruction. Principals will contact parents this week and communicate more about the process. We know that parents want to know *when* they will be informed if their child has been selected. This date may be different for each school and level. The space available is evolving and varies by school, grade level, and class. There are more seats in our high schools than at elementary or middle levels. Again, thank you for your patience as each school works through this complex process. We are trying our very best to return as many students to in-person school as frequently as possible while also following prevailing local, state, and national health guidance and direction.
- Our teachers will be working with secondary students to help them complete work that may be missing or incomplete from the first half of the school year. We want to ensure we are doing all we can to help our students learn and master the material that's being taught under very difficult circumstances.

We are acutely aware of how very difficult this year continues to be for our students and staff. We are eager to have all of our students back in our schools and have a return to normalcy. We'll continue to keep you updated as we learn more from local, state, and federal officials.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jim Scanlon, Superintendent