

September 26, 2020

Dear West Chester Area School District,

Our School Board is set to further consider and vote on our plan to return to hybrid instruction on September 29 at 7 p.m. [The meeting will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel](#) and questions/comments will be received until noon on Sept. 29. [Please click here to submit questions/comments.](#)

Chester County Department of Health Director Jeanne Casner will participate in our meeting and will answer questions from our School Board/community.

As you are likely aware, the West Chester Area School District joins with other districts across Chester/Delaware Counties in planning for a return to in-person (primarily hybrid) instruction in the coming weeks. Virtually no public schools in PA can accommodate the widely recommended 6 feet of social distancing to provide adequate COVID-19 mitigation. This is why schools are looking at bringing only half of their students in person at certain days/times, then switching.

West Chester worked with a 150-member staff task force to consider a variety of hybrid models and is recommending an AA/Remote/BB model. Students would be placed alphabetically into either an A or B cohort:

- **“A” students would attend on Monday and Tuesday**
- **Wednesday would remain a remote day for all students**
- **“B” students would attend on Thursday and Friday.**
- Students would access classroom instruction via Schoology and Zoom on their at-home days.
- The instructional model and schedule may be different at each grade/level.
- **Elementary students (K-5) will return to hybrid instruction October 19, and Secondary students (6 - 12) would return November 5.** This schedule was designed to bring our youngest students back to in-person instruction first, but also to provide continuity with the end of our first marking period for secondary students.
- School start times will revert to our traditional, in-person times, however, ***we will shorten the student school day by 30 minutes each day*** to provide adequate teacher planning time.
- Families will be able to remain in the Remote program, and can return from Cyber to hybrid. We'll be sending information to families about this in the coming weeks.

You can view our updated [Health and Safety Plan](#) as well as the [presentation](#) we will use on September 29. We also encourage you to read our [Return to Hybrid FAQs](#). Additional comments/questions can be sent to: reopening@wcasd.net. Thank you for your patience as our administrative team has been inundated with emails.

We have a wide number of COVID-19 safety protocols developed as we return to in-person instruction. These protocols have been working well with the 470 highest-need special education students and English Learner students who have already been attending school in a brick and mortar setting in our schools since the summer.

We are designating time for staff training as we transition to hybrid. Parents should note that times *not included in our existing calendar that will now be used for training include*: Elementary: **October 13 – 16** (these will now be morning-only days for students as afternoons will be dedicated to staff training) and Secondary: **October 29, 30, Nov. 2, 4** (these will now will now be morning-only days.) Principals will send reminds as we move forward.

We have a very large amount of information to share with our parents as we make this transition. We know there are many questions. I will be scheduling live parent chats/info sessions, and we will be providing a lot of detailed information to our families in the coming weeks.

None of this is ideal. We all very much want a return to life as normal. As a school administrator and a parent I understand the widely varying viewpoints, concerns, frustrations, and worries that the pandemic has placed on education. Thank you to our staff for their unwavering commitment to our students, our parents for their continued support, and our students for always providing positivity, hope, and inspiration for all of us. We are truly doing all we can to balance needs, opinions, and requirements. In the end, we all want the same thing - for our students to be well educated, nurtured, and supported.

Thanks for reading this, and thanks for granting us all a little grace as we work through this extremely challenging time.

Sincerely,

Jim Scanlon, Superintendent