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November 6, 2020

Dear Parent and Guardians,

The purpose of this message is to notify you of the current level of community transmission for Lehigh County and the potential impact it may have on our Instructional Model.

Today, Friday, November 6, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) released updates to the metrics that are used to determine the level of community transmission in Lehigh County. The *incident rate per 100,000 residents over the previous 7 days* (156.5 - substantial) and *PCR percent positive* metric (7.7 - moderate) placed the county's level of community spread as "substantial".

According to the PDE's guidance for [Determining Instructional Models During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), a rating of "substantial" in either metric places the entire county in "substantial" with the recommended instructional model for Lehigh County schools being a "full remote learning" model only. Per PDE, the final decision for the instructional model remains a local decision.

It is important to recognize that the Lehigh County's *incident rate per 100,000 residents* and *PCR percent positive* are two of many pieces of information that public schools consider in making informed decisions regarding their instructional models and health and safety practices. Lehigh County school districts examine other quantitative measures such as state, county, local, and individual school positive case metrics, in addition to obtaining the latest research and guidance from meetings with our local and state health officials and respective health networks. This comprehensive analysis allows each school district to better understand the data and trends occurring regionally and throughout their respective school communities.

Superintendents representing each of the public school districts in Lehigh County met to discuss this development and the challenges a shift in learning model will create for our students, families, and community at large. We, as district leaders, recognize that our districts are not entities unto themselves, but rather interwoven with other school communities whereby the decisions made by one has the potential to create a ripple effect across the county. Maintaining a level of consistency across Lehigh County schools whenever possible helps to alleviate the negative impact felt throughout all of our families.

After careful consideration, we have decided as a group that it is in the best interest of our students, staff, and communities **that we maintain our current instructional model until further notice.** We will continue to monitor the data and reevaluate this decision on a regular basis.

We truly recognize the challenges this pandemic has created for everyone. Please rest assured that our decisions continue to be made with the best interest of our students, staff and community.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,
Lorie Hackett
Superintendent of Schools