



# COVID-19 Community Update

## Return-to-School Planning

July 27 – 31, 2020



# Purpose

- The purpose of this podcast is to provide **specific details** about the recommended **educational program model** to **start** the 2020 – 2021 school year.
- This podcast is based in the PRSD Health and Safety Plan but will focus more specifically on the educational program model.
- FAQ documents are being developed for staff and families to respond to questions.



# Resiliency

- For the foreseeable future, **change is a constant**. Guidance and regulations have changed and will continue to change.
- **Patience and flexibility are critical**. When change is required, we will be thoughtful and deliberate. We will consult relevant experts and agencies. We will then communicate to the extent possible.



# Return-to-School Continuum\*

## “Old Days”

Schools operate as they did on and before March 13, 2020.

## Traditional with Significant Restrictions

Restrictions could include limiting the number of students in a class; alternative transportation options; staggered schedules, etc.

## 100% Virtual

All students are learning remotely from home.



**\*Regardless of entry point, the possibility exists that we will shift left or right.**



# Key Drivers

We will continue to use **three key drivers** for the return-to-school decision-making process:

1. **Health, safety and welfare** for students and staff aligned with the CDC, PDOH and ACHD.
2. Delivery of an **effective educational program** for student development (academic, social and emotional).
3. **Flexibility** for staff and families.

**A perfect “one size fits all” solution does not exist.**



# Guidance Updates

The frequent release of updated guidance and information from local, state and federal sources are a challenge for planning. Several recent updates are available via these links:

- [CDC Guidance Update \(July 23, 2020\)](#)
- [PDE Universal Face Coverings Order \(July 17, 2020\)](#)
- [PADOH FAQ RE: Targeted Mitigation Order \(July 15, 2020\)](#)
- [AAP COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-Entry \(June 20, 2020\)](#)
- [ACHD Isolation-Quarantine Basics](#)
- [ACHD Guidance for Travelers \(June 28, 2020\)](#)



# Healthcare Leadership Council Membership

**Senior Leadership Team:** Dr. Miller (Superintendent); Dr. Pasquinelli (Asst. Superintendent); Dr. Justus (Asst. Superintendent); Mr. Noel Hustwit (Director of Student Services & Special Education); Mr. Kenney (Director of HR & Legal Affairs); Ms. Hathhorn (Director of Communication); Mrs. Kirk (Director of Financial & Operational Services); Mr. Shawn Stuebener (Director of Technology)

**Administrators:** Mrs. Nancy Bowman (PRHS); Dr. Dave Kristofic (PRMS); Mrs. Paula Giran (EHUE); Mrs. Greta Kuzilla (HES/RES/WES); Dr. Maura Paczan (Lead Psychologist); Mr. Jeff Zimmerman (Director of Facilities); Mr. Clayton Gruber (Custodial Supervisor); Mr. Sean Simmons (Director of Athletics)

**Staff:** Mr. Chris Vins (PREA President); Mr. Brian DeVinney (PREA Secondary Vice-President); Mrs. Danielle Kcehowski (PREA Elementary Vice-President); Mrs. Patti Noble (ESPA President); Mrs. Michelle Schonbachler (School Nurse Department Chair); Mrs. Kim Charney (Transportation & Facility Use Coordinator); Mrs. Barbara Williams (Administrative Support); Ms. Margo Kohler and Mr. Jim Bichler (Building Level Technology Coaches)

**Governance:** Mrs. Christine Misback (PRSD School Board)

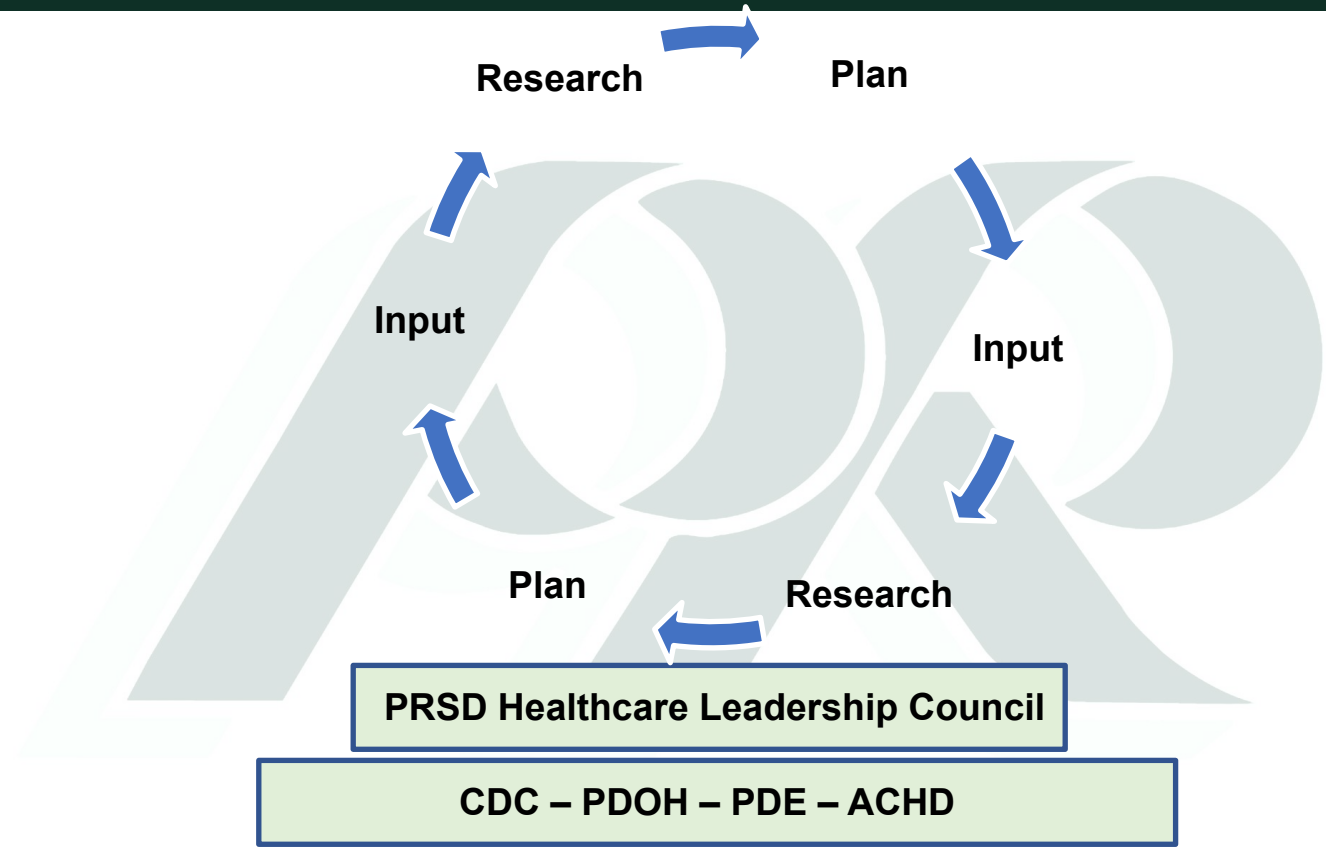
**Students:** Executive Board Pres: Zeyad Amr; Class of 2021 President: Gaby Stone.

**Key Partners:** Mrs. Colleen McAndrew (STA Manager); Mr. Andy Hartman (STA Assistant Manager); Mrs. Diane Bucknum (SODEXO Manager)

**Medical and Public Health Experts:** Dr. Domenic Mantella (PRSD School Physician); Dr. Amy Cashdollar, Chief Operating Officer (AHN); Erin Colvin, CRNP (CHP); Dr. Vaughn Cooper, Professor of Microbiology Molecular Genetics (Pitt) Co-Founder of Microbial Genome Sequencing Center; Renee Dixon, RN (UPMC); Dr. Tony Farah, Executive Vice President, Chief Medical/Clinical Transformation Officer (HH); Dr. Catherine Hrach, Emergency Physician (BHS); Dr. Jenene Hunkele, Sr. Medical Science Liaison (Alexion); Dr. Allan Klapper, CEO (AHN); Dr. Brook McHugh, Pediatrician (AHN); Dr. Tyler Quinn, Research Physiologist (NIOSH); Dr. Ryan Shields, Infectious Diseases Pharmacist/Assoc. Professor of Medicine (Pitt; UPMC)



# Iterative Process







# Second Survey Results

- We have conducted two surveys at this point. The second survey results show parents' desire to return for in-person instruction (70%).
- However, parent confidence for an in-person return reduces with a confirmed case in the school and significantly reduces with a confirmed case in their child's classroom.
- Staff survey results demonstrate a higher level of concern for risk of exposure due to self or caregiving (24%).
- These results – parents and staff – provide important information for the selection of the initial educational program model. The model is designed to maximize health/safety conditions for the start of school.



# Evaluating Potential Models

Model	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Selection	Summary	Health/Safety Effectiveness of Learning Flexibility (Families and Staff)	Health/Safety Effectiveness of Learning Flexibility (Families and Staff)

Over the course of the past few weeks, many potential models for in-person and virtual instruction were developed. Each model was evaluated for advantages and disadvantages against the three key drivers (i.e., health/safety, effectiveness of learning and flexibility).

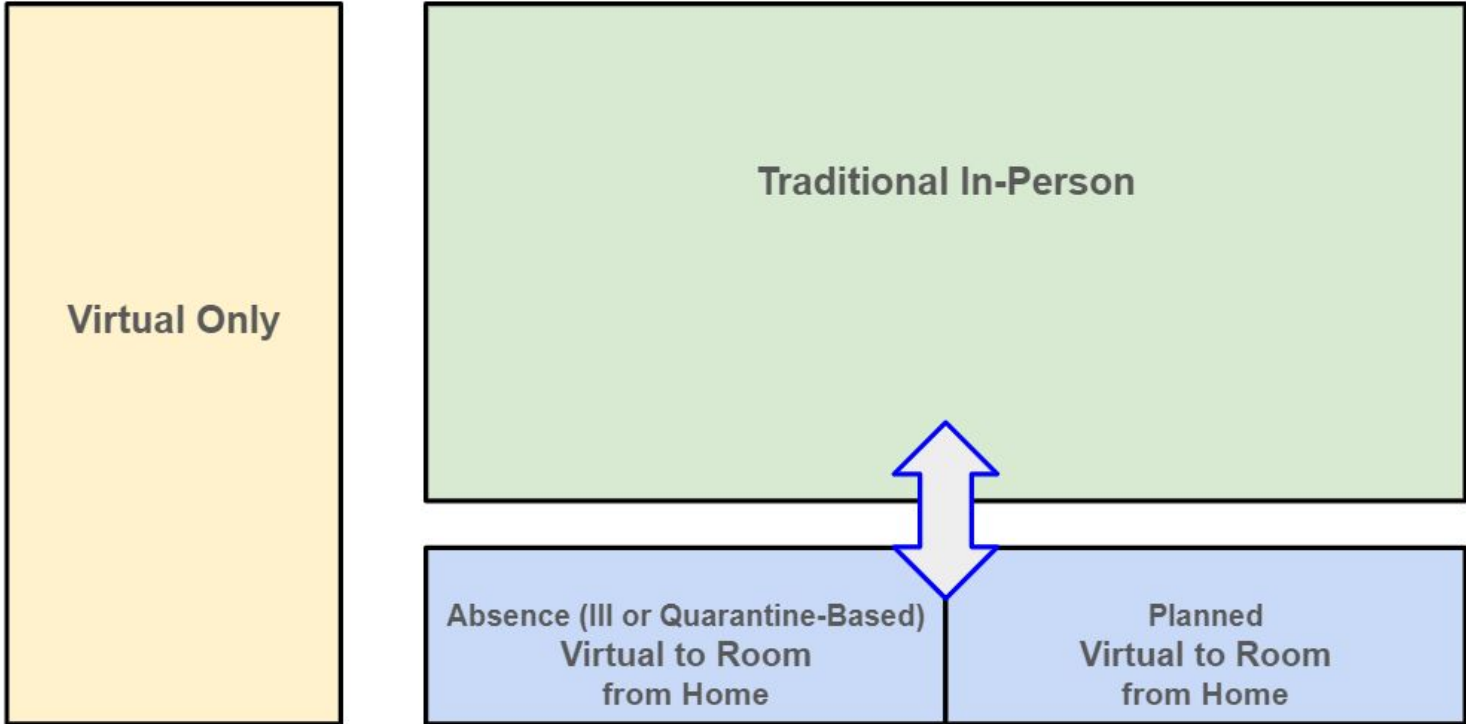


# Model Selection

- At this time, the educational program model selected to start the 2020 – 2021 school year is a combination hybrid approach that **maximizes the health/safety key driver** by reducing the number of in-person students.
- The reduction of in-person students allows for **maximum physical distancing**; a critical mitigation measure for reducing the level of transmission risk.
- The reduction of in-person students also supports **management of other spaces** and services (e.g., bus, hallways, cafeterias, bathrooms, health, etc.)
- Variations in the model account for **age differences** (K-3, 4-6 and 7-12).
- An **incremental return** to in-person instruction aligns with public health guidance and increases the potential to “stay open.”



# Evaluating Potential Models



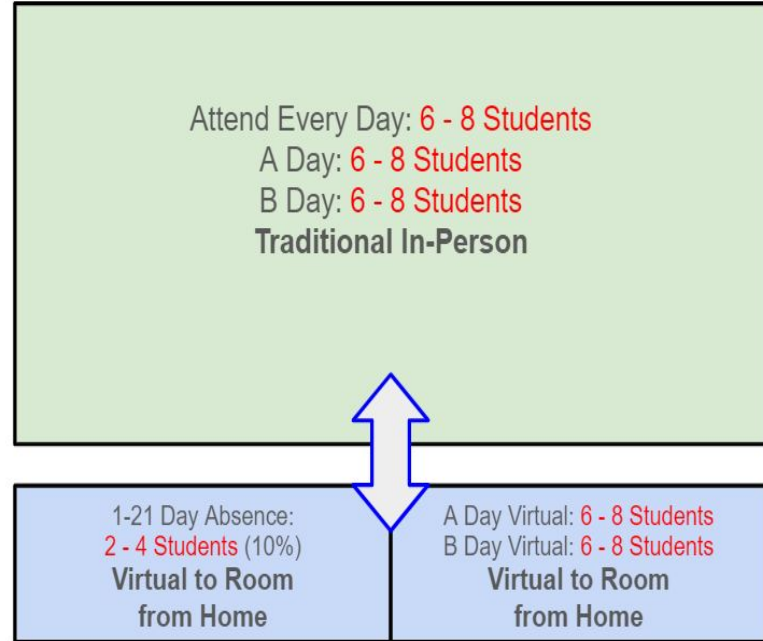


# Hance, Richland and Wexford

## K-3: Families will have three options:

1. Attend in-person every day (green)
2. Attend in-person on a A/B day schedule [students remotely connect on alternating days] (green/blue)
3. Attend 100% virtually [taught by a teacher designated as the virtual-only teacher] (yellow)

Every Day:  
 Separate Roster of Students  
 Virtual Only  
 By Dedicated Teacher



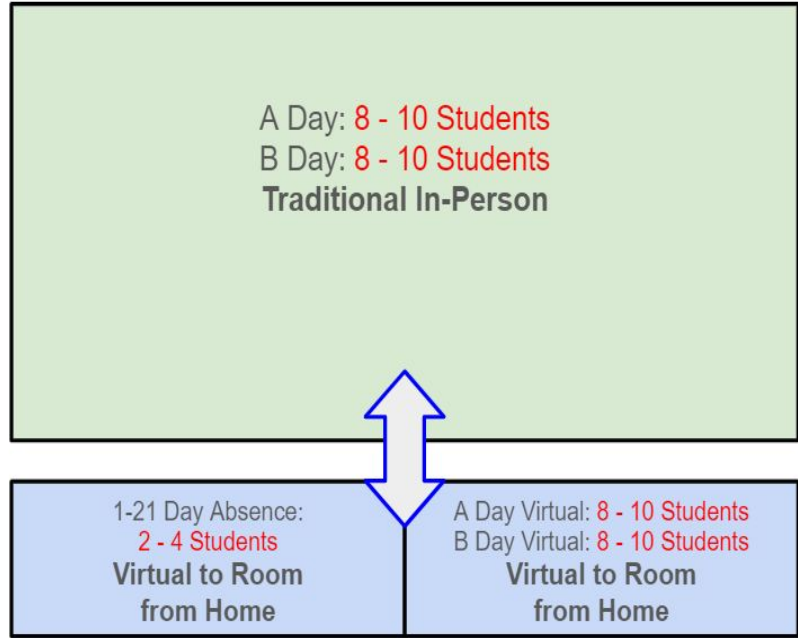


# Eden Hall

## 4-6: Families will have two options:

1. Attend in-person on a A/B day schedule [students remotely connect on alternating days] (green/blue)
2. Attend 100% virtually [taught by a teacher designated as the virtual-only teacher] (yellow)

Every Day:  
 Separate Roster  
 of Students  
 Virtual Only  
 By Dedicated  
 Teacher

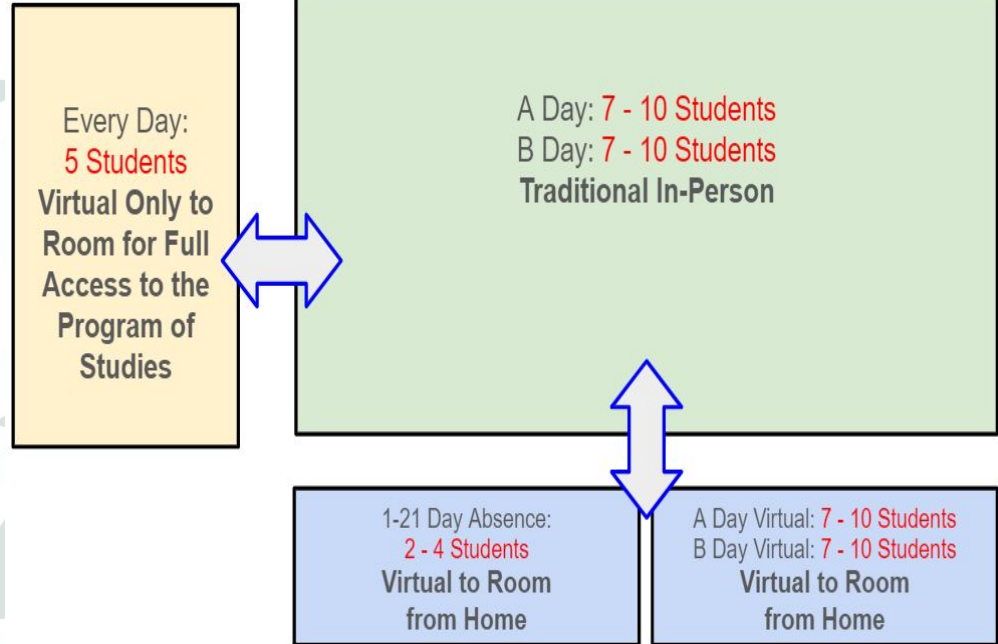




# Middle School and High School

## 7-12: Families will have two options:

1. Attend in-person on a A/B day schedule [students remotely connect on alternating days] (green/blue)
2. Attend 100% virtually [students remotely connect and follow the same schedule as in-person students] (yellow)





# K-12 Special Education for Tier III

## **K-12: Special Education and Students in Tier III Interventions will have three options:**

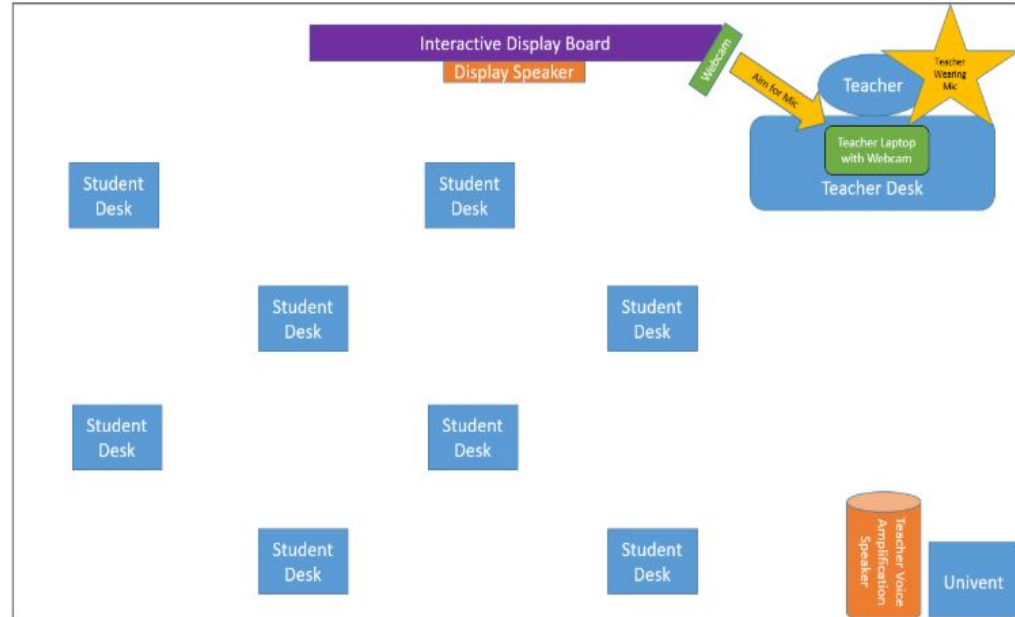
1. Attend in-person every day (green)
2. Attend in-person on a A/B day schedule [students remotely connect on alternating days] (green/blue)
3. Attend 100% virtually [K-6 taught by a teacher designated as the virtual teacher] or [7-12 these students will remotely connect to their classrooms and follow the same schedule as in-person students] (yellow)





# Technology and Textbooks

- By leveraging and increasing the use of certain technologies, the “blue” (K-12) and “yellow” (7 – 12) can be addressed by the teacher in the classroom (i.e., interactive display boards, voice amplification systems and webcams).
- The district is working to ensure that laptops will be made available for all students who need them.
- A system for distributing print materials and textbooks will also be implemented.





# Health and Safety

## Advantages

- Highest level of in-person restriction results in lower class size with full staffing model allows increased distancing (6' on center);
- Increased distancing and smaller cohorts of students may lessen need for quarantine (i.e., should not qualify as "close contacts" due to distancing);
- K-3 option to remote in to class reduces in-person numbers on A/B days as well;
- K-3 students are at an age found to transmit COVID-19 at lower levels than older children and adults;
- Allows monitoring of health conditions and virus progression with flexibility to extend model or recommit students and families to in-person (possibly daily) or virtual only after it is experienced;
- Model allows increased distance during breakfast/lunch and further reduces the stress placed on all larger group spaces (e.g., bus, hallways, cafeteria)
- Face covering breaks could be afforded to students more frequently based on the increase of 6 feet between desks per PDE;
- Virtual-only option for some students and potentially some staff that require workplace accommodations;

## Disadvantages

- For any in-person settings, a level of risk exists. That level of risk is lowered through the detailed health and safety precautions outlined in the PRSD Health and Safety Plan.



# Effectiveness of Learning (Academic/Social/Emotional)

## Advantages

- Accounts for developmental differences in students (K-3 students are less independent) and early literacy and numeracy skills;
- Flexible choices for families based on students' learning preference;
- In-person instruction - even on alternate days - provides opportunities for social interactions with adults and peers;
- Teacher of record works with his/her students;
- Curriculum pacing and alignment is consistent for all students regardless of location;
- Full Program of Studies (POS) at the secondary level;
- Technology allows focus on in-person students with maximum level of synchronous experience for virtual students;
- Flexibly adapts to shifts between in-person and virtual learning as needed;
- Classroom management strategies to further engage virtual students with classmates and teacher will improve with time and the reduced number of in-person students eases this transition;
- Co-teachers and /or paraprofessionals will help manage online students;
- Students with IEP in more intensive Tier III programs can attend all five days in person to receive interventions with fidelity;
- Attendance and engagement expectations for all students.

## Disadvantages

- Increased instructional challenge of classroom management procedures and routines (learning curve for staff);
- Planning requirements for assessment and grading may differ for in-person versus virtual students;
- Potential limits for virtual students to engage, ask questions or participate in real time on virtual days;
- Approach to assessment and feedback will require modification to ensure academic integrity;
- Difficult to balance needs of students in-person and virtually simultaneously.



# Flexibility for Families and Staff

## Advantages

- K-3 option for every day in-person instruction provides greater flexibility for parents who are working;
- K-3 option for daily instruction provides flexibility for students that can not manage virtual due to attention span;
- Can transition to support short-term school or district closures;
- Allows families to make selections based on the unique needs of each student in their households;
- Provides easy transition between in-person and virtual experience (short-term illness or quarantine) for students and staff;
- Percentage of staff could deliver model from home if necessary with another adult in the classroom for supervision;
- All students would develop familiarity with online platforms to help transition to virtual only setting if necessary.

## Disadvantages

- Majority of staff must report for in-person instruction;
- Technology reliance prevents real-time trouble-shooting if issue arises;
- Staff privacy and student privacy concerns (FERPA) with the use of webcams; possibly identified students with services attending five days.
- Initially does not provide an everyday in-person option for general education students in grades 4-12 which may create a challenge for supervision in the home.



# Home Symptoms and Attendance

- A critical element of reducing risk is to ensure that students are evaluated at home by parents/guardians each morning.
- Students demonstrating symptoms of any type of illness or a fever above 100.0 degrees should remain home.
- Students must begin to **practice healthy hygiene habits - fundamentals - at home** PRIOR to the start of school (e.g., proper and frequent handwashing, coughing/sneezing appropriately, building tolerability of cloth mask/surgical mask/face shield for fidelity; honest self-reporting of symptoms of illness).
- Due to the significance of this time period, in-person attendance requirements will be monitored on a case-by-case basis with the expectations that students at home are learning in the “blue.”





# Face Coverings

- A link to a PDE FAQ for this topic is available [here](#).
- Fully supported by the PRSD Healthcare Leadership Council experts, face coverings are critical for reducing risk of transmission and help create a safer environment for students and staff. We ask for support from our community in this area so that we can focus energy on learning.
- There are conditions that allow students to have a break from face coverings in school.
- PDE defines face coverings as: *“...covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A “face covering” can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen, and, for the purposes of the order, can include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth. “Face coverings” may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or improvised from household items, including but not limited to, scarves, bandanas, t-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels.”*



# Additional Details

- The PRSD Health and Safety Plan has additional details about other areas of return-to-school planning. Examples include:
  - Special Areas
  - Equipment Sharing
  - Transportation (Bus and Parent Drop-off/Pick-up)
  - Cafeteria
  - Hallway Transitions
  - Bathrooms
  - Health Office
  - Testing, Contact Tracing, Quarantine and Isolation
  - Travel
  - Athletics and Activities
  - Visitors and Meetings



# Communication

- The district maintains our commitment to communication.
- As it relates to personal and specific health-related communications, there are limits to the amount of detail that can be provided.
- When a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, the district will plan a general communication that indicates the school.
- Families and staff should maintain clear communication with the school nurse.
- As part of the contact tracing process, an ACHD case manager would directly communicate with a family in the event a student or staff member is designated as a “close contact” that would require a quarantine period.
- Close contacts are defined by ACHD as *“someone that you have been within six (6) feet for 15 minutes or more, even if masked, during that time period.”*
- Importantly, the model presented for the start of school significantly reduces that risk by reducing the number of students and increasing physical distancing.





# Timeline

- July 28th - PRSD Healthcare Leadership Council Meeting #4
- July 29th - Clarification Discussions with Board (groups of three via phone)
- July 31st - Post the updated plan on the website to allow time for staff and parents to review (eBlast for notification)
- August 3rd - Board Action on Initial Plan
- **August 4th - Third Survey for Parents (Window closes by August 7th)**
- August 4th to 7th - Continued Development
- August 10th - Board Action on Revised Plan
- August 11th to 14th - Continued Development
- August 17th - Potential Board Action on Revised Plan (If Needed)

\*If an adjustment in the academic calendar is needed for additional planning, the change would be communicated as soon as it is known.



# Next Parent Survey

- Now that the specific details of the educational program model have been outlined, we will issue another selection survey for parents. At this time, the selection is focused on school start through the end of September.
  - K – 3: Select choice of every day in-person, alternate day in-person or 100% virtual.
  - 4 – 6: Select choice of alternate day in-person or 100% virtual.
  - 7 – 12: Select choice of alternate day in-person or 100% virtual.
  - Tier III Special Education: The Pupil Services Department will coordinate with families on an individual basis to clarify programming.
- The Human Resources Office and Building Supervisors are working to review potential staff concerns on a case-by-case basis.



# Contingency of 100% Virtual for All

- **We are also refining a 100% virtual option in the event that all 4,600 students need to learn at home.** Similar to March 2020, it is possible that an agency or conditions will require schools to close for “in person instruction” with 100% virtual learning for all students.
- If this option is required, we are actively working to design significant improvements to the structure and approach used from March 16, 2020 through May 29, 2020.
- Even if this model is required to start the year, we must work hard to prepare for the day that a transition to in-person instruction occurs.
- In other words, we need to be ready for everything.



# COVID-19 Website

- Please continue to monitor this district website for information and resources.
- We are building and refining comprehensive FAQ documents separate for parents and staff. **Some detailed questions cannot be answered at this time. Planning will continue through the start of school.** In other cases, answers shift based on changing regulations or conditions.
- We are committed, though, to providing answers if possible. The model proposed in this podcast maximizes health/safety for a combination in-person and virtual program.
- It is important to understand that guidance evolves and plans will also require modification as they are implemented to increase effectiveness.
- Thank you for your patience and support in this challenging and stressful time.



# Community Approach

- School districts are just one part of our ecosystem.
- The precautions taken in the community over the next few weeks will have an impact on conditions in our school district and other school districts in this region.
- Face coverings, physical distancing and frequent handwashing continue to serve as the most significant personal commitments that each of us can take to support the region and our schools. These decisions help each of us.
- We will get through this together.