



RINGGOLD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent of Schools

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January 28, 2021

Dear Ringgold Family,

We would like to thank each of you for your extraordinary efforts and assistance in returning our students to their classrooms. We know that the challenges of the pandemic are real and without the collaborative commitment of our educators, support staff, families, administration and the Board of School Directors our children would not have been able to return to school.

We have heard expressed concerns and some confusion over the decision to return to school. That confusion is understandable and we wanted to take just a few moments to provide information on what the latest 'guidance' to schools has been and what that means for Ringgold School District.

Previous to our return to school, and previous to the release of the 'attestation form' provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), schools were provided with guidance which was related to PCR percent positivity, incidents per hundred thousand residents (incident rate) and level of community transmission in the County. The PDE and DOH put together a chart that provided schools with a roadmap that was related to the above and contained three categories of low, moderate, and substantial. Schools were encouraged to use the chart to determine their instructional models. The District followed that guidance.

On January 7th, the PDE and the DOH released new guidance to schools which made recommendations in determining instructional models specifically for the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year. This new guidance steered away from total District closures and implemented a 14 day rolling period in which schools were to track positive cases. The PDE further indicated in the latest guidance that the size of the school was to be considered in evaluating the number of cases when considering closure. This latest guidance means that the closure of schools is not only based on number of cases, and County transmission rates, but also on school size. The new guidance also provides suggested ranges for number of days a school should close, but makes it clear that these time frames are only recommendations/suggestions and that if case investigations, contact tracing and cleaning and disinfecting can be accomplished in a faster time frame, the length of closure may be shortened.

In response to the new guidance, there will be times when one school may close and another may not. In addition, because the District will have to consider a number of factors in determining if a building closure is warranted, it may seem on first glance that there is an inconsistency in application of the guidelines. Be assured, we are working diligently to implement the ever changing guidelines, and they will continue to look different for the different

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schools in our District. Our commitment is to have our students in school, to maintain and continue with as many after school activities and opportunities as is possible, and to provide our students with the best education possible during this pandemic. To that end, we are continuing in our commitment to implement and maintain the strictest and most aggressive cleaning schedules, adherence to and monitoring of the strictest mitigation protocols, and repeated reminders of ways in which we can keep each other safe during this time.

While we cannot provide information regarding personal health information of students or employees, we will continue to do our very best to provide general notice to families regarding cases in the District. We do understand that our legal requirement to keep employee and student information confidential impedes on our ability to be transparent. This is a challenge that all schools in the Commonwealth continue to face. Nonetheless, when positive cases arise, we will continue to be vigilant in our contact tracing and will provide notification to anyone who has been determined to have been “in close contact”.

We want to thank you again for your continued support as we move through this school year. Ringgold is proud to have been able to offer the option of in-person instruction for our students for a substantial portion of the school year. We are also proud to be able to continue moving forward in our planning of important in-person events such as graduation, move up days, etc. We know that these ‘moments’ are critically important to our students and families.

We thank you in advance for your continued support

Sincerely,

Randall Skrinjorich

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