



# BUTLER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Butler Area School District Community:

I hope your families are safe and well. As we continue to prepare for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, I want to provide our school community with an update. Our priorities for the 2020-2021 school year are:

- Stay safe. We will do all that we can to keep everyone in our school community safe.
- Reopen our schools. Unless the Governor issues a mandatory closure, we intend to open our schools.
- Provide options. This situation is constantly evolving as are the individual needs of our students. Our goal is to provide our families with several options as well as the flexibility to move between the learning options as needed.
- Support our students. We will continue to strive to support our students academically, socially and emotionally.

To meet these priorities, we have found it necessary to revise our initial plans to put additional strategies and options in place to keep students and staff safe while meeting the needs of our students. Our initial plan had three planned strategies based on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Red, Yellow and Green designation. We have added another level, which we are calling Enhanced Green in our documentation.

In our Enhanced Green designation, the student experience will be very different than when we left school in March. We are fully implementing social distancing in our elementary schools. For the start of the school year, and until further notice, we will be operating full time 5 days a week in self-contained socially distanced classrooms in grades K-6. In grades 7-12, students will be socially distancing students when it is possible to have 6 feet between students. However, the majority of the day of the students will need to comply with the state's universal face covering order.

*Please note: The universal face covering order has been imposed upon all school districts by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The order is specific to schools and it is different than the order issued to the general public.*



# BUTLER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

At the request of some parents and guardians, we will be expanding by offering Flexible Traditional School for secondary students, even when the school district is operating Traditional School five days a week.

In this new learning pathway, the students will only come to school 2 days a week and complete at home work the other 3 days. The at home work may include teacher assigned work, digital assignments and digital instructional resources.

This is not our normal operating procedure, nor is it ideal, but it does allow us to open our schools and comply with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Pennsylvania Department of Education. We believe our procedures also meet the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While many of our families are eager to return to school in person, we understand that some of our students are not yet ready to return. That's why we have prioritized having options for our families. As you are probably aware by now, we will have three Learning Pathways this year -- the Traditional School Model, the Online/Cyber School Model and the Hybrid School Model (for grades 7-12). In addition, we will have the new Learning Pathway called the Flexible Traditional School Model that will enable students in grades 7-12 to attend school in person 2 days a week and online 3 days a week. All of the options will be available for all of our students throughout the entire 2020-2021 school year.

We are one community. Regardless of the Learning Pathway you choose for this year -- we are here for you. Our faculty, staff and administrators are here to serve the students and families in our community. We want your child to be successful. We want your child to have access to the support he or she needs. And, most importantly, we want your child to be safe.



# BUTLER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

There is not a “one size fits all” approach to reopening our schools. We are one community composed of individual people with individual needs. As we prepare to come back together, I’m asking everyone to please be respectful of the guidelines and procedures we are implementing for a safe reopening of our schools. That’s the only way traditional live instruction in our schools will work.

We have worked to ensure our reopening plan incorporates all directives from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. This includes wearing a face mask, face covering or face shield. The Department of Health is requiring that all students and staff members wear a face mask, face covering or face shield. If a student is unable to wear a face mask, face covering or face shield, the school is required to provide space for that person to remain socially distanced (at least 6 feet) from all others throughout the entire day. Unfortunately, at our secondary schools, it will not be possible to be socially distanced all of the time. If we have too many students with a valid reason for not wearing a face mask, face covering or face shield, we will not be able to operate five days a week with live instruction.

Ultimately, our goal is not just to reopen our schools, but to stay open. We need your help to do this. Thank you in advance. I’m looking forward to an unconventional, but great year.

Sincerely,  
Brian White, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Butler Area School District