

Mifflinburg Area School District

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*(this communication was sent on behalf of Dan Lichtel, Superintendent,
Mifflinburg Area School District by Justin Haynes,
Mifflinburg IT Services Coordinator, via e-mail 08-11-2020)*

August 11, 2020

Good afternoon everyone,

Yesterday, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Health coordinated a call with the three Union County School Districts (Lewisburg, Mifflinburg, and Milton) and the SUN Area Technical Institute to inform us of a methodology that they have begun to use to identify COVID-19 transmission rates for counties in Pennsylvania. The transmission rates rely on two standard public health metrics: incidence rate and percent positivity of diagnostic testing.

These measures do not consider the variety of demographic characteristics that can contribute to the data, such as cases that arise in congregate settings like prisons or nursing homes. Nevertheless, thresholds have been established for the following three levels of transmission: Low, Moderate, and Substantial. As of this week, Union County has been named as a "Substantial" county.

The Departments of Education and Health provided recommendations with regard to the kind of instructional models to use in each of the three different categories. Hybrid or full in-person instruction is recommended for low status. Hybrid or full remote instruction is recommended for moderate status. Full remote instruction is recommended for substantial status.

We have been advised that a county's corresponding threshold may change week-by-week as incidence and percent positivity rates rise and fall. In order to confirm stability of county transmission, when a county's corresponding threshold changes, school entities should wait to see the results from the next 7-day reporting period before considering a change to their instructional model. To ensure the most effective transition for students, it is recommended that schools wait even longer, up to a full marking period, to transition to an instruction model that increases in-person instruction.

We understand that many members of our community are already aware of these developments, and we have received countless communications from stakeholders interested in sharing their thoughts on our reopening plans. We considered all feedback from community stakeholders as we developed our reopening plan, and we feel confident that our plan is safe for students, families, and staff. However, when the Board approved our School Reopening Health & Safety Plan, we advised that it was a fluid plan that would continue to develop over time and would be updated as needed.

The Board of Directors of the Mifflinburg Area School District will have their next meeting this evening Tuesday, August 11th, 2020 beginning at 7:30PM. Information to view the meeting via Zoom is posted on the District website. The meeting will also be streamed through Facebook Live.

We appreciate all of the correspondence we are receiving. It is our intention to continue to provide you with information regarding the reopening of Mifflinburg Schools as we navigate this new situation.

Respectfully,

Daniel Lichtel

Daniel R. Lichtel
Superintendent of Schools