

# Mifflinburg Area School District

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Dear MASD Parents, Guardians and Community,

*The first day of school makes you feel like anything is possible.*

I wish I had said that, but the credit goes to William R. Hite, Jr., the Superintendent of Schools in the City of Philadelphia. The spirit of optimism is true in Philadelphia, and how much more true here in Mifflinburg Area School District where opportunities for young people abound! Still true today, although the opportunities look very different than last year's first day of school.

As you may recall, on July 28<sup>th</sup> the Mifflinburg Area School Board Directors approved a plan to open all MASD buildings on August 20, 2020 to kick-off the new school year. However, at the School Board meeting held on August 11, 2020, the School Directors approved a revision to the MASD 2020-2021 School Year calendar to postpone the **first day of school for students until Tuesday, September 8, 2020**. This action also adds an additional five student days to the end of the school year.

While the entire District, our Board of School Directors, parents, administration, faculty, and most of all, our students, were very hopeful to open our school buildings in August with live, in-person instruction, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Health diverted the direction of that plan with an early call the morning of August 10<sup>th</sup>. During that conference call, Superintendents of Union County were informed that recent positive COVID-19 cases in Union County had increased our County's threshold to a "substantial level" and suggested we consider options for remote instruction. The State's recommendations were shared with the Board and the public in my Superintendent's Report to the Board at their August 11<sup>th</sup> meeting and may be listened to by visiting the district's website, [www.mifflinburg.org](http://www.mifflinburg.org).

Our planning and decision making are taking into consideration not only the student learning experience, but the day to day considerations of our families. This District is committed to offer the best learning experience for our children as we continue to consider the goal of implementing school for a full marking-period, rather than a week to week basis, to avoid emergent disruption of all instruction. In the meantime, I want you to know we are all working diligently toward a plan to pivot to a hybrid learning model or fully remote at a moment's notice, **if necessary**.

Perhaps you are wondering what instruction would look like to move to a hybrid model of instruction? This information is included in case we need to transition to a hybrid schedule to reduce daily school populations. We are presenting this now so families have opportunities to prepare for this possibility in advance. The Mifflinburg Area School District will use the following schedule if we need to implement a hybrid model:

All students with the last name beginning with “A – M” attend school in-person with live instruction on Monday and Wednesday each week, and complete remote learning activities on Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays;

All students with the last name beginning with “N – Z” attend school in-person with live instruction on Tuesday and Thursday each week, and complete remote learning activities on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays;

Student health and safety is a main concern, and we all remain hopeful that our “substantial” category definition will improve with the next report from the State. In the meantime, we are exploring ideas and various avenues to support our families with regard to child care, learning resources, and any other way we can. Your continued support, your patience, understanding and partnership with us is invaluable and most necessary at such an unprecedented time. We welcome our families’ participation and community’s partnership in this uncertain endeavor. Next week, you will receive another communication with a more in-depth explanation of how the hybrid model will work.

May the spirit of optimism and possibility, so evident in the smiles of our students on the first day of school, live on throughout the year in front of us. Don’t let our children see the hesitation, confusion, and even fear in some of the eyes that peer out from over their protective masks. Let’s make the most of what has been dealt to all of us. An uplifting thought, indeed, especially when so much uncertainty is before us.

Respectfully,

*Daniel Lichtel*

Daniel R. Lichtel  
Superintendent of Schools