



**South Butler County
School District**
Educational Vision...
One Student at a Time

District Administrative Office
328 Knoch Road, Saxonburg, PA 16056
(724) 352-1700

December 1, 2020

South Butler Families,

As you already heard through last night's phone message, the South Butler County School District School Board voted to accept my recommendation of continuing remote instruction until January 11, 2021. Please know that the District is aware and concerned about the challenges that this creates for South Butler students and families. State recommendations, staffing concerns, and issues that may occur throughout the holiday season have resulted in a more cautious approach until we get to the New Year.

The rationale for extending remote instruction between Thanksgiving and the Christmas/New Year's break is as follows:

- Certainly, concerns related to transmission throughout the school community are of major concern and with the most recent requirements from the Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Education, should the District experience 1-7 cases in a single building, closures would be required. Depending upon the specific issues and the recommendations from the Department of Health, an outbreak could result in closures from 3 to 14 days.
- Over the Thanksgiving break, I was made aware of staff members who have tested positive, are awaiting results or have been exposed to COVID-19 and are required to quarantine. Although we have found that transmission among our students has been somewhat limited, prior to Thanksgiving, there were 39 staff members who were unable to teach from school because of COVID-19 related issues. The entire South Butler staff and School Board know the importance of in-person instruction; however, if there are not enough staff to supervise and provide instruction due to COVID-19 related issues, we cannot have students attend in person.
- We are aware of a couple of COVID-19 related student issues, but we are anticipating additional issues being shared with the District in the upcoming days. There is also a concern that throughout the Christmas and New Year's break, students and families may be exposed to COVID-19. Although the January 11th restart does not allow a full 14 days of quarantining, it will allow the District to verify both student and staff issues before reopening after the holiday season.

Although in-person learning remains the best situation, the approach we have been using with livestreaming of instruction presented by your child's teacher has been very successful and we will continue to refine our practices over the next several weeks. When we return on January 11, we will be using the hybrid approach with the A/B schedule at the secondary level and a full return to school for elementary students, just as we did at the start of the school year.

I appreciate the patience of everyone throughout the entire South Butler County School District. Please know that we are doing our best to get our students back into the classrooms safely. The issues that exist with the unpredictability of the virus make long-term planning difficult. The current challenges associated with COVID-19 are large, but there are reasons to be optimistic moving forward.

Respectfully,

David Foley, Ed. D.

Superintendent