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Troy Kilzer, II Superintendent

To: Chester County Schools Stakeholders
From: Troy Kilzer, II, Director of Schools
Date: July 16, 2021
RE: Information on Reopening Plan for Schools for the 2021-22 School Year

Good morning. What a significant learning curve was experienced last school year! At approximately this same time of the calendar year last year, I shared with all stakeholders the "new normal" of the processes and procedures that would be occurring at schools everyday to address the C-19 virus pandemic.

Our school district stood out among many other TN school districts to primarily offer our students and families access to a quality education everyday in our public schools. There were many challenges with this approach, but all school staff realized the supreme value of a face to face educational experience. Our staff believes that the best education for our students is where our educators and staff can deliver instruction to students onsite and in-person. In hindsight, this approach has proven fruitful for our students' well-being.

Our continued priorities with the reopening of Chester County Schools are the safety and well-being of our students and staff. When students and families realize that the schools are safe to learn and grow, then we can and will prioritize educational opportunities where all students can learn at high levels." Chester County Educators model lifelong learning for our students. This past school year did provide some unique circumstances and procedures for staff, students, and families that have proven successful and worth continuing.

Face Coverings not required by students and staff- For the start of the 2021-22 school year, our students (grades 3-12) and staff will not be required to wear face coverings during the school day. Before the end of the 2020-21 school year, the Chester County School District dropped the Critical Infrastructure designation with the Tennessee Department of Health. The TDoH required the wearing of face coverings of those school stakeholders to maintain this designation. If a student/family or individual staff chooses to wear a face covering, their decision will be permitted and supported.

Student Dress Code adjustments for 2021-22 School Year- During the 2020-21 school year, more liberty was afforded to the students in grades 4-12 with their dress code due to the inclusion of the students wearing face coverings. Since face coverings are not mandated for students for the 2021-22 school year, there will be a modified return to the students' dress code. Adjustments to the student dress code will be as follows:

- Shirts (crew-neck, polo-style, traditional, or turtle-neck collars allowed) are required to be plain, solid colored or school-related themes and can be worn tucked or untucked.
- Hoodies will be permitted to be worn and are required to be plain, solid colored or school-related themes. Hoods will not be allowed to be worn while in the school building.
- Belts (solid black or brown colored style) are not required to be worn.
- Pants, walking shorts, or skirts can be any solid color and be worn and fitted at the waist line.
 - The following types of pants/shorts are not allowed:
 - Jeans/denim or jeans-type pants,
 - Athletic pants or shorts in regular school settings (school settings other than P.E. setting)
 - Yoga pants/tights/leggings
 - Cargo pants, carpenter pants, or overalls
 - Pants, walking shorts, or skirts with holes, rips, or tears.

The student handbooks provided online and/or by hard copy will reflect the adjusted revision to the students' dress code. These adjustments allow for more liberty of the student dress code than previous school years.

(Recommended but not required) Health Screening Checks of students prior to the arrival at school- Families of students are asked to continue to assess their children's wellness before arriving at school each day. As was the routine last school year, if a student has a temperature of 100.4° or other symptoms of sickness, the student should remain home or seek medical attention. As in previous school years, the student's family will be required to contact the school office staff to inform them of the student's current condition and reason for not attending school. When the ill student is treated by a physician, a medical note or narrative should be provided to the school office staff for student attendance record.

The same screening questions from last school year can continue to be assessed:

- *Have you been in close contact (6 feet or less for 15 minutes or longer) with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or other contagious illness?*
- *Are you currently experiencing a chill, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?*
- *Do you currently have a fever (100.4° or greater) in the last 48 hours?*
- *Do you have a new loss of taste or smell?*
- *Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?*

School nurses will continue to monitor and assess students' wellness during each school day. If students display symptoms that may be determined as sickness which could result in a contagious setting affecting other students and staff, the student's family will be notified and determination made for best placement of the student. For the 2021-22 school year, school nurses will be able to perform C-19 tests to students and staff. School nurse staff and students' families will work together to determine best placements for everyone.

Best practices for hygiene of all during the school day- School staff will continue to teach all students through direct instruction and modeling better hygiene practices. The health guidelines are as follows:

- *Wash hands for at least 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use available hand sanitizer.*
- *Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces often during the school day.*
- *Personally avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.*
- *Cover coughs and sneezes with tissue or the crook of the elbow. Wash or disinfect hands after.*
- *Stay home or seek medical attention if you are sick or experiencing symptoms included in the screening document.*
- *Avoid others when sick.*

Signs including these guidelines will be strategically placed throughout the school buildings and support the instruction of our students concerning better hygiene practices. Hand sanitizer stations will be positioned visibly in multiple visible locations in each school campus. Hand sanitizer supplies (may include liquids, wipes, etc.) will be purchased and available at each classroom and other student/staff locations. The custodians will continue to work to properly clean and disinfect all school locations daily. The staff and students will also do their parts to support the cleanliness of the schools for the health and safety of everyone. All will be taught by instruction and modeling of these guidelines of better hygiene practices to reduce the spread of germs.

C-19 testing to be available for students and staff by school nurses at the six (6) school campuses- Chester County Schools were awarded funds through the Tennessee Department of Education's "Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) COVID-19 Testing Grant." Chester County Schools plan to offer, but not mandate, intermittent PCR testing for staff and students during the 2021-2022 school year. If a student or staff member has been exposed to someone who is positive with COVID-19 or exhibits multiple symptoms of COVID-19, he/she may qualify to be tested by a school nurse. Parental consent will be required before any student testing would take place.

Other ELC funds will be used to provide modifications and supplies to school nurse clinics in all six schools.

Continue to provide bus transportation to and from schools available every school day- Bus transportation will continue as normal. Better hygiene practices will also continue with the school bus transportation. As in previous school years, students' families will be able to make the decision if they would like their children to ride the bus or bring their children to school. The safe travel of students to and from school to home is the highest priority for our transportation services.

Public access to school events- The school settings will be more available for onsite access of families during the 2021-22 school year. However, there will be some carryover of more restrictive practices from last year to ensure that our students and staff are safe and protected during the school days. School leaders will be communicating their plans for the procedures of students and families to meet their students' teacher(s), leaders, and other staff virtually or by appointments to reduce the number of visitors at campuses with acceptable capacities.

As practiced last school year, unplanned or unscheduled meetings with students' families and staff will be limited. The school staff will continue to host required meetings for students and families during the school year (either virtually or in-person). Families may request a teacher or principal meeting by scheduling at least one (1) school day before the event and may occur in-person, virtually, electronically, or by phone. School staff agree that students should feel comfortable in the school settings and be acclimated to how the classroom, hallways, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and other school building locations will be available.

Continued practices of the Chester County Food Service Program- For the 2021-22 school year, the school program will include a free breakfast and lunch for all students. To ensure that all meal items can be served in a safe manner to comply with current health recommendations, there will be changes in the serving and selecting food and drink choices. The food and drink items available will meet all nutritional requirements to ensure well balanced diets for our students and staff. Decisions of how, when, and where student meals will be served and consumed will be made by the school administrators.

Accommodations for learning opportunities for students who are unable to return to school for medical reasons- Our students are exceptional and will quickly demonstrate progress in their learning as educators and staff identify areas of need with student learning and provide quality instruction and practice daily. Our staff are exceptional and diligent to meet students where they are in their learning path and move all to greater gains. Continuing this school year, there may be times when students are unable to be at school because of personal medical reasons. We have experience that our students and staff benefit with the continuation of learning and growing with consistent social interactions. If a student is not permitted to return to school for brief periods of time due to personal medical reasons, distance learning will be available. As was made available last school year, the school district staff will recommend and/or provide available resources for the student who requires distance learning which may include technology equipment and internet accessibility to support learning from home. Distance learning for students from home will be only available to those who for medical reasons require it based on the physician's narrative. All instructional services will be available to all students whether onsite at the physical school settings or at home.

Closing comments- In closing, I pray that this school year will begin with more familiar practices as in previous school years. I claim that no one prefers to have another school year repeated like 2020-21, but some of those new practices have benefitted our students and staff and will be continued. The Chester County School Staff are ready to get this 2021-22 school year started and look forward to the opportunity and privilege to educate every child entering this school year. Please know that the best interest of all children drives every decision that is made by school district staff and leadership.

We need to continue to work together, support one another, and cooperate in order to create the best learning opportunities for success for our children. If you have any concerns or suggestions that would benefit our plans for the 2021-22 school year, I would appreciate the feedback. Please contact the Chester County Board of Education office at (731)989-5134 during regular business hours or use my email, Troy.Kilzer@chestercountyschools.org.

I learned many years ago that we all learn with and through others. Be confident that our staff is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our children and all students will learn. It is truly a privilege and honor for me to serve Chester County in this role. I am grateful and humbled with the support that the community has already demonstrated to our staff. Chester County truly is a great place to live and learn. Go BIG BLUE!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy Kilzer, II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a double underline at the end.

Troy Kilzer, II
Director of Schools