



OFFICE of the SUPERINTENDENT  
1201 8<sup>th</sup> AVENUE  
ALTOONA, PA 16602

July 29, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The PA Department of Education (PDE) requires all Pennsylvania school districts to submit a Health and Safety plan that details the district's plan for a safe return to school. Although the CDC issued guidance to school districts this past week, Pennsylvania schools are ultimately under the guidance of the PA Department of Health (PADOH). PADOH and PDE have notified districts that they intend to issue additional guidance. As a public-school district in Pennsylvania, we are required to follow all State and Federal mandates but at this time neither the state nor the federal government has made any changes to existing mandates.

Based on current conditions, our return to school plan is for a normal start to the school year. Transmission levels continue to be very low in Blair County and the Altoona Area community. As we know, this situation could change quickly, and we will be prepared to adjust our plan accordingly in the event circumstances warrant changes.

At this time, the district's plan is to NOT require masks for students physically attending our schools. Parents and students may choose to wear a mask while inside but it is not a requirement at this time. Additionally, masks will continue to be required on public transportation including all school transportation as per Federal mandate.

It is recommended that any student that is eligible to be vaccinated, get vaccinated and the district will be providing a vaccination opportunity for any eligible student who wants to be vaccinated. As per CDC guidelines, social distance of 3 feet will be encouraged in classrooms and large gathering areas to the greatest extent possible.

Instructional platforms offered at this time will be traditional in-person or the Altoona Cyber Academy. The virtual learning and synchronous instructional platform will be used only in a quarantine situation when it is feasible.

Many questions remain unanswered including whether transmission levels (low, moderate, substantial) will continue to be used and whether or not contact tracing and related quarantines will still be mandated. We will be updating the Health and Safety Committee in the next few weeks as direction and mandates continue to change. We anticipate any change to the district's plan to be voted on at the August 16<sup>th</sup> school board meeting. Additional information will be shared with you as it is released. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles A. Prijatelj".

Charles A. Prijatelj, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools