



Nazareth Area School District
One Education Plaza • Nazareth, PA 18064-2397
Dennis L. Riker, Ed.D., Superintendent

November 18, 2020

Dear Nazareth Area School District Families:

The purpose of this message is to notify you of the current level of community transmission for Northampton County and the potential impact it may have on the Nazareth Area School District's instructional model.

Today, Friday, November 13, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) released updates to the metrics used to determine the level of community transmission in Northampton County. **The incident rate per 100,000 residents over the previous 7 days is 218 and PCR percent positive metric is 8%. Northampton County's level of community spread continues to be categorized as "substantial."**

According to the PDE's guidance for [Determining Instructional Models During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), a rating of "substantial" in either metric places the entire county into the "substantial spread" category and recommends Northampton County schools offer a "full remote learning" model only. However, per PDE, the final decision for the instructional model remains a local decision. As of today, there have been ten (10) confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Nazareth Area School District. Through consultation with the DOH and contact tracing, it was determined that no cases were a result of community spread in our buildings.

After careful consideration, discussions with superintendents of school districts in Northampton County, and sharing this information with the Board of Education, **we will maintain our current instructional model until further notice.** We will continue to monitor the data and reevaluate this decision regularly. **This means that Nazareth Area School District will continue to operate in a Hybrid model of instruction as long as conditions in our schools and community remain safe for students and staff.**

However, conditions are constantly changing and may require a school or the District to move to full remote instruction, either in the short or long term. We encourage everyone to have contingency plans for such an event.

When making our decision to stay the course with our instructional model, District leadership discussed the challenges a shift in learning model will create for our students, families, and community. We also considered the success the District has had mitigating the spread of the disease thanks to our staff, students, and families who have been working together to follow face covering, social distancing guidelines, and utilizing the pre-screening tool before reporting to school. Our District's contact tracing procedures and the partnership developed with the local Department of Health have also been working well to identify and mitigate the virus.

Additionally, we recognize that our district is not an entity unto itself, but rather interwoven with other school communities whereby the decisions made by one has the potential to create a ripple effect across the region. Maintaining a level of consistency across Northampton County schools helps to alleviate the negative impact felt by all of our families.

We truly recognize the challenges this pandemic has created for everyone. Please be assured that our decisions continue to be made with the best interest of our students, staff, and community.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Dennis L. Riker, Ed.D.
Superintendent