

# Nazareth Area School District

One Education Plaza • Nazareth, PA 18064-2397

Dennis L. Riker, Ed.D., Superintendent

November 9, 2020

Dear Nazareth Area School District Families:

I am writing to inform you of a joint meeting hosted today by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) with respect to county levels of transmission of COVID-19 and instructional models for all school leaders in Northampton County. All Superintendents from Northampton County school districts participated in the meeting. PDE and PA DOH issued a chart in August 2020 that created three tiers of community transmission rates that school districts should use to determine if in-person instruction should occur. The tiers (low, moderate, substantial spread) look at incidence rate and positivity rate metrics as noted in the chart below:

<b>Level of Community Transmission in the County</b>	<b>Incidence Rate per 100,000 Residents (Most Recent 7 Days)</b>	<b>AND/OR</b>	<b>PCR Percent Positivity (Most Recent 7 Days)</b>	<b>Recommended Instructional Models</b>
Low	<10	AND	<5%	Full In-Person Model OR Blended Learning Model
Moderate	10 to <100	OR	5% to <10%	Blended Learning Model OR Full Remote Learning Model
Substantial	≥100	OR	≥10%	Full Remote Learning Model

Today, PDE and PA DOH informed all Northampton County schools that Northampton County has moved from a “moderate” level of community transmission (counties with more than 10, but less than 100 cases per 100,000 residents) to a “substantial” level of community transmission (Northampton County rate is now at 137.8). Northampton County’s positivity rate is at 6.5% which is identified as a “moderate” level of community transmission. However, as the chart indicates above, if one of the two indicators are determined to be “substantial,” then the county is identified as having a “substantial” level of community transmission.

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Given that this is the first week Northampton County is identified with a “substantial” level of transmission, PDE and PA DOH have recommended that school districts maintain the current instructional model (hybrid). If Northampton County remains in a “substantial” level of community transmission at the end of this week (Friday, November 13, 2020), PDE may recommend Northampton County schools move to fully remote instruction. PDE recommends that schools in a fully remote instructional model remain with this instructional model until such time as Northampton County returns to a “moderate” level of community transmission of the virus for two consecutive weeks while they continue to analyze the trends. We will continue with a hybrid instructional model next week if our incidence rate drops below 100, the positivity rate remains below 10, and Northampton County is identified with a “moderate” level of community transmission.

The Nazareth Area School District continues to implement its Health and Safety Plan protocols. We feel confident, at this time that the spread of COVID-19 has not occurred within our schools. Therefore, based on both the PDE and DOH recommendation, Nazareth Area School District will maintain our hybrid instructional model with a remote learning option this week. It is important to have contingency plans if a building or our entire District needs to switch to fully remote instruction for short or long term. We anticipate an update to the Northampton County data by week-end and at that time the District will review the data and provide updated communication to you in regards to our instructional model moving forward.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to make sure our children are safe in our schools.

Sincerely,

Dennis L. Riker, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools