



# Selinsgrove Area School District

Office of the Superintendent

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**Dr. Frank R. Jankowski, Superintendent**

November 10, 2021

Selinsgrove Area School District Community:

The Selinsgrove Area School District would like to provide an update related to COVID mitigation changes as of 11/10/21. Also, there are a few concepts to emphasize, which play a pivotal role for us to continue to offer in-person instruction and minimize the potential for COVID-related impacts on school operations:

## **Important Concepts to Continue In-Person Activities:**

- ✓ **It is imperative that families utilize the COVID screening tool daily to make sure that students who do not feel well, stay home. Feel free to contact our nurse's offices if you are in need of further guidance.**
- ✓ **If a parent/guardian (household member) is having symptoms and/or getting tested, we are asking you to keep your students home until you have verification that they haven't been exposed to COVID-19 in the home.**
- ✓ Last evening at the regularly scheduled school board meeting, the Selinsgrove Area School District approved its health and safety plan which included two adjustments:
  1. Contact tracing and associated quarantining will be focused on household member "contacts" and symptomatic students and/or staff. School-based "contacts", both students and staff, will no longer automatically be required to quarantine unless there is a unique factor which justifies the decision. In short, non-symptomatic or healthy individuals will not be required to quarantine from school/work at this time. Our data over the last 15 months shows definitively that 98-99% of the time when non-symptomatic individuals were quarantined, they did not end up testing positive for COVID. (Data available on the district's pandemic response page details that it refers to over 1,000 quarantining situations.) An accompanying statistic to further support the decision is connected to the amount of school days missed by students and staff. Just this school year, we have already had between 1,500 and 2,000 days missed by students and staff who were deemed close contacts, and never tested positive for COVID. We are confident that this decision will help our community's businesses, our staff, our families, and most importantly our students on multiple levels.

2. Within our health and safety plan, it specifies that our school board's original decision of **optional face-coverings is considered the default decision** when there is a change to the face-covering order and related decisions. On Monday, 11/8/21, the Governor's Office pushed out information related to an anticipated January 17<sup>th</sup> return to local decision-making. Additionally, the Commonwealth Court's decision earlier today **in the Corman v. Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health case determined the Secretary's August 31, 2021 Order mandating masking, void and unenforceable. Therefore, effective with the start of the school day tomorrow, November 11, 2021, the District is returning to the optional masking position set forth in the District's Health and Safety Plan.**

\*We will continue to evaluate on an ongoing basis what is in the best interests of our school community and the health and safety of our students in handling the challenges presented by COVID, especially in the absence of clear directives by other governing and policymaking entities.

We thank you for your support and patience as we look to make sound and comprehensive decisions which are in the best interests of our students and various stakeholder groups throughout the community. If we all work together, we will succeed.

Sincerely,

Dr. Frank R. Jankowski