

Stroud Public Schools

"Home of The Tigers"

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Information Regarding the 2020-2021 School Year Blended Learning Model Considerations

August 2, 2020

The start of school each year represents a time of excitement, change, renewals, and some level of anxiety about what the future holds. Clearly, we face an unprecedented level of anxiety, at least during the lifetimes of most members of our current populations. Our history tells us that we overcome our obstacles, succeed in our ventures, and develop the strategies that ensure our continued resilience as a great nation.

Our acknowledgment of the varied levels of anxiety that we face has led us to follow a blended learning model for this school year. Our strategy allows a high level of flexibility to allow parents the ability to modify the physical location of the education of their children for their education needs according to the circumstances of any given day. Students will have digital instruction whether onsite in a traditional setting or some other location in a virtual/distance setting. There may be instances of paper-based strategies on an as needed basis. The overarching goal is to provide a strong level of instruction for students, whether they are virtual/distance or attending onsite and on campus at each of our schools.

Our policies related to attendance allow students to maintain attendance onsite at school or in a virtual/distance participation. Those details will be available through the individual building sites. They are consistent across all sites, and we believe highly attainable. A high degree of parent oversight is inherent in the virtual/distance approach within the blended model for attendance and student performance. We believe our collective goals are attainable.

We maintained a high level of cleanliness in our facilities prior to COVID-19 in an effort to have a school climate favorable to school attendance. We implemented cleaning strategies that exceeded many other public areas that others seek to achieve today. We are increasing our capabilities and approaches. Our efforts will be good. The challenges of our time make this less than invincible however, and in any public area there exists an element of risk with the health concerns that exist.

There are no regulations at this time that mandate masking and we are not implementing that strategy at this time. Masking for students and staff is allowable as per each person's choice. Conditions may necessitate changes here, but this is our approach at this time. Distancing is to be practiced as is practical in each of our physical facilities. This can be difficult to almost impossible depending on class loads and some activities. Some may consider that masking is appropriate in situations that do not allow distancing to a level of comfort at different times of the day. Students will provide their own personal PPE as is desired.

Quarantines due to different levels of COVID-19 exposure or illness are to be expected. Personnel, students, parents, and others will be screened for temperatures before entering our buildings. If an

individual demonstrates a temperature of 100 they will be denied entry or restricted to a specific building area if denial of entry is not appropriate at the time. Parents should pre-screen their children for symptoms of COVID-19 each day and maintain virtual/distance school attendance until it is determined they are not COVID-19 positive.

If a student has been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, they will enter a 14-day quarantine protocol at that discovery. That student will be required to test negative for COVID-19 no sooner than the twelfth (12th) day of the quarantine with documentation provided to the school prior to reentry.

If a student tests positive for COVID-19 they will enter a fourteen (14) day quarantine and must pass two (2) negative COVID-19 tests no sooner than the twelfth (12th) day, or have a signed document from a medical authority recognized with the ability to determine the student is not contagious prior to school reentry.

Students who have been determined to be in close contact at school with a student who tests COVID-19 positive will enter a fourteen (14) day quarantine and test negative no sooner than the twelfth (12th) day of the quarantine. Close contact has been defined by the CDC as being within six (6) ft. for a period of fifteen (15) minutes at a time of a person testing positive for COVID-19.

Due to the nature of school and classroom settings, our approach will identify individuals in a classroom setting as meeting that standard (six ft. /15 minutes) due to the proximity of students in an area for extended periods of time. Stated a different way is that a student in a classroom for fifteen (15) minutes or more with a student who tests COVID-19 positive will meet the condition of quarantine. This can extend to other areas of school presence depending on many circumstances of a reasonable determination and applied accordingly.

As you consider the possibilities of close contact at school and the potential quarantines resulting from those conditions you must understand the challenges of operating school with an onsite building presence without interruption during the year. Your advantage is that we have the best flexibility for the maintenance of education, whether onsite or virtual/distance at your discretion at the first level. Quarantines from school become a school determination on the basis of CDC recommendations and the best information available at the time

Your cooperation and understanding are appreciated. I propose that no one has “the answer”, but all people have their “own answer”. We have made every attempt to respect your concerns. We know there will be disagreement. I suspect if I ask one hundred people for their opinion or preference, I will get one hundred different answers. I have talked to more than one hundred people. I can claim I am correct in that summation at a minimum.

Due to the ongoing nature of our experience since March, we must recognize there may be more modifications to our approach to education. It is difficult to answer all questions with an information rendering such as this. We know from the volumes of information that answering all questions is lengthy and ongoing. The questions continue as do the attempts to provide viable answers. No doubt we will have more communications forthcoming from time to time. Hopefully this will provide a good basis to move forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe L. Van Tuyl
Superintendent