Back To School Question and Answer

July 29, 2020

Additional questions can be sent to:

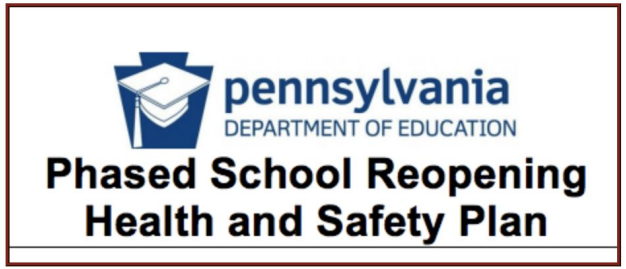
pandemic-team@mca.k12.pa.us

Return to School:

- We acknowledge that anything short of a full return of all of our students creates hardships for our students, families and community.

Health and Safety Plan

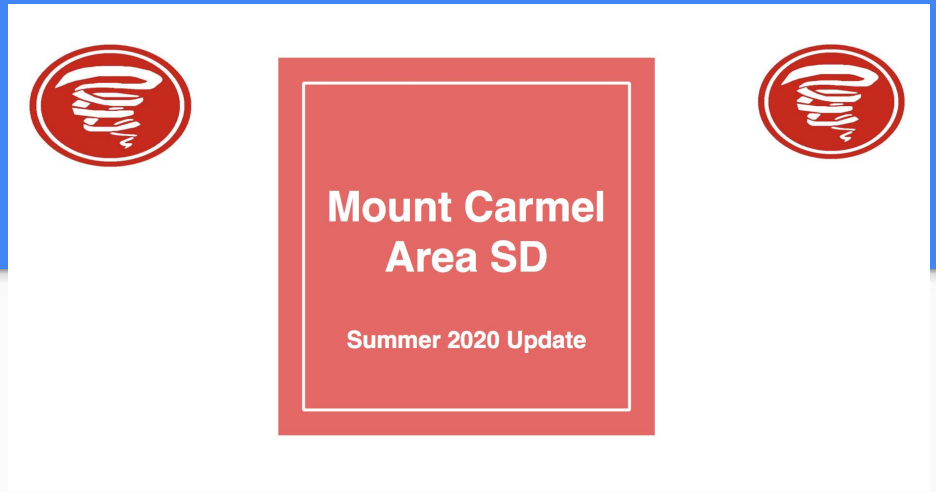
- Be mindful that as long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there are no strategies that can completely eliminate transmission risk within a school population.
- Schools were not built for 1,500 students to be socially distant
- The goal is to keep transmission as low as possible to safely continue school activities.
- Our plan is “fluid” and is found on our district site: http://www.mca.k12.pa.us/wp/



Resources

- Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)
- Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH)
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Local Medical Experts including Geisinger and Evangelical
- Northumberland County Emergency Management Department
- Local School Districts
- Out of County School Districts

Planning



Option #1 Full Return

Option #2 Virtual

Option #3 Hybrid

*** All families must plan for a situation where we would be forced into option #2 or option #3. Especially related to child care issues.

Reopen School Research

- On July 10, 2020, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) urged the return of students to in-class learning citing concerns about social and emotional benefits, healthy meals and exercise, mental health and other supports that cannot be easily replicated in an online model.
  https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/
- Research by Kuhfeld et al. (2020) acknowledges that the closure of school buildings likely led to substantial educational losses showed that the disadvantaged/low socioeconomic status students who have less opportunity to learn at home.
- CDC “Importance of Opening America’s Schools this Fall” Updated July 23, 2020
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html

Option #1 Full Return

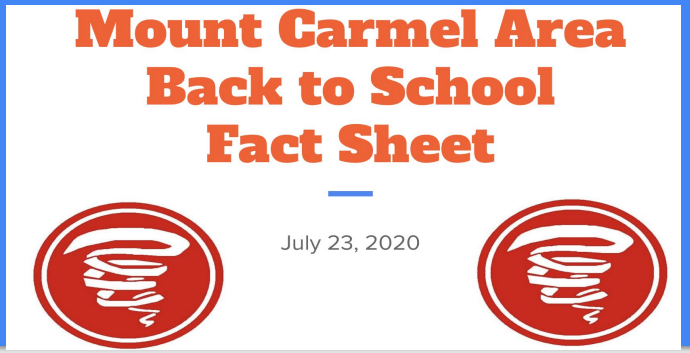
- **Scheduled first day of school is August 24th**
- **Our hope and expectation is that students will return to in-person instruction on August 24th.**
- ***There will be two choices available to families under Option #1 Full Return:***

  ● <u>100% In-Person Instruction:</u> Your child can attend school in person using the social distancing and personal protective equipment enhancements made by MCA.

  ● <u>100% online Instruction:</u> Your child can attend school remotely. A separate fact sheet will be available soon. Families will be asked to choose in person or online instruction for their child by every first of the month. (October 1st, November 1st, December 1st, etc.)

- ***MCA will ask families for their desired option of in-person or online instruction every 1st of the month. (October 1st, November 1st, December 1st, etc.)***

Synchronous Learning



- If a family chooses online instruction - the instruction will be synchronous. Your child will log on and view their MCA teacher deliver “live” instruction at certain times of the school day. Virtual attendance will be taken for each class.
- See “BACK TO SCHOOL FACT SHEET” on main website.
- *Asynchronous options will be available as well. (Instructional Video will be accessible at another time.)*
- ***Students online will only be seen by the teacher.*** *No student online will be seen by the students in the classroom.*

What will school look like if I send my child physically into school?

- MCA has purchased face masks for all students and staff.
- PPE equipment has been added to all classrooms
- Student desk dividers have been purchased. (picture on next slide)
- We will follow our health and safety plan to clean and sanitize our buildings.
- One way direction hallways will be utilized.
- Large group gatherings (cafeteria, auditorium) will be limited.

STAFF & STUDENT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

MASKS

DESK SHIELDS

CLASSROOM DIVIDERS

KN95 MASKS

PROVIDED TO ALL STUDENTS

PROVIDED PER TEACHER REQUEST

What are we asking of parents:

- Please complete by Friday, July 31st
- JH-SH Form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd9icmbTEYH7UBw4svMxeE__GeheMXZqzGGA_7_zxuu_6SPvA/viewform
- Elementary Form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc119GJAzw5XyZtWROaYta9mlDp4Onhb0U0E_4z0d0gZVvcXA/viewform

Question #1 Must all staff and students wear a mask?

Governor Wolf's Mask Wearing Order:
https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/gov-wolf-sec-of-health-signs-expanded-mask-wearing-order/
and
The PA Department of Health's announcement on face coverings:
https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/Waivers/MaskWearing/Pages/default.aspx

- **When can my child take off their mask?**
  - eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart
  - seated at desks or assigned work spaces at least 6 feet apart
  - engaged in any activity at least 6 feet apart (e.g. face covering breaks, recess, etc.)

  *There will also be scheduled face covering breaks throughout the day.

- **What if my child has asthma or other respiratory issues?**
  -Would a face shield be okay?
  -Contact physician for their thoughts on your child wearing a mask and obtain a note if they feel your child should not wear a face covering.
  -504 plan or revision to IEP may be considered upon recommendation from the child's physician

Question #1 Continued. What if my child cannot wear a mask?

See PDE Website: “Face Coverings Section”

https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx

“Children two years and older are required to wear a face covering unless they have a medical or mental health condition or disability, documented in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA, that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school. Accommodations for such students should be made in partnership with the student’s health care provider, school nurse, and IEP/504 team.”

- We understand possible issues with this order. Please contact your building administrator for more information and synchronous learning options.

Question #2: What will bus transportation look like?

Pennsylvania Department of Health Guidance: (See Section on busing and transportation) Updated July 16, 2020

https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx

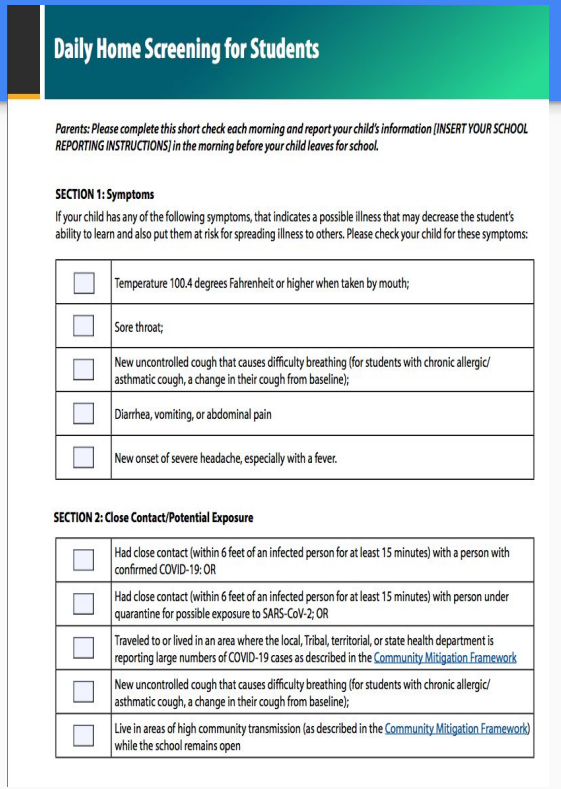
- Masks
- Assigned Seating & loading buses from back to front
- Additional bus runs to minimize number of students on bus at one time
- Encourage families to provide alternative modes of transportation when possible

Question #3 - Must parents screen their child before sending them to school?

CDC Guidelines: (Updated July 23, 2020)

- Yes includes taking their temperature.
- See screening tool
- School nurses will add “how to” video to district website soon
- Keep your child home if they are sick

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html



Daily Home Screening for Students

Parents: Please complete this short check each morning and report your child's information [INSERT YOUR SCHOOL REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS] in the morning before your child leaves for school.

SECTION 1: Symptoms

If your child has any of the following symptoms, that indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student's ability to learn and also put them at risk for spreading illness to others. Please check your child for these symptoms:

☐	Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth;
☐	Sore throat;
☐	New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/ asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
☐	Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
☐	New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

SECTION 2: Close Contact/Potential Exposure

☐	Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19; OR
☐	Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with person under quarantine for possible exposure to SARS-CoV-2; OR
☐	Traveled to or lived in an area where the local, Tribal, territorial, or state health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases as described in the Community Mitigation Framework
☐	New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/ asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
☐	Live in areas of high community transmission (as described in the Community Mitigation Framework) while the school remains open

Question #4 - What will happen if someone is COVID positive?

- Pennsylvania Department of Health Guidance Updated July 16, 2020
- See section “Responding to Confirmed or Probable Cases:
- https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx
- Will contact PA Department of Health at 1 877 PA HEALTH
- Risk Assessment will be completed. The PA Department of Health will guide us. Confidentiality!
- What is considered an “exposure?” CDC Guidance:
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html
- CDC Guidance on Contact Tracing (Updated July 22:) https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/contact-tracing.html

Question #5 How is lunch going to work?

- Cafeteria and Gymnasium in both buildings (possibly additional spaces if needed)
- *See PDE and PA Department of Health Guidance: See section "Meals and Cafeterias" Updated July 16, 2020.*
- https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx

MCA Food Service money deposit options (limit the handling of cash:)
http://www.mca.k12.pa.us/wp/food-services-2/

Question #6A - (Jr.-Sr. HS)
What will hallways look like when the bell rings?

PDE and PA Department of Health Guidance (See section on “Hallways”)

https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx

- One way direction hallways will be utilized
- Staggered bell dismissal schedule
- One way directional steps
- Signage

Question #6B- (Elementary)
What will hallways look like when the bell rings ?

PDE and PA Department of Health Guidance (See section on “Hallways”)

https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx

- Grades 4-6 remain departmentalized - students will remain in homerooms and teachers will rotate instead.
- One way directional steps & Signage
- Student will eat outside the classroom (gym or cafeteria), have recess and special classes will be taught within homerooms.

Question #7 Will all students get a district Chromebook?

- Yes
- Arrangements will be made for parents to pick chromebooks up if they choose the virtual option
- Over 800 new Chromebooks were ordered by the district in June 2020
- Describe roll out procedure

Question #8 - Does the current Governor mitigation order apply schools? (ie 25 people indoors)

- No
- See FAQ Section on “Schools” Updated July 15th
  https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/Targeted-Mitigation-FAQ.aspx

Question #9 How will the school be cleaned, sanitized and disinfected?

- PA Department of Health Guidance (See Hand Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection.) Updated July 16, 2020
  https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx
- Students will be permitted to have water bottles; however, water fountains will be closed for use.
- Hand Sanitizing stations in each classroom and hallway
- Implement and supervise the daily and weekly COVID-19 cleaning activities.
- Classrooms and common areas will be ventilated with additional circulation of outdoor air when possible.

Question #10 What will recess look like? Gym Class? Music?

- PA Department of Health Guidance (See “Outdoor Playground Spaces”)
- https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx
- Gym classes will be outside when possible and weather permits.
- Gym, Art, and Music Teachers will rotate into classrooms in order to limit movement and keep student cohorts together.
- Virtual - Synchronous, scheduled classes for virtual participation.

Question #11 Would it be possible to start my child off as full return in person and then switch to online or vice versa if I decide the option I chose is not working out for him?

- Yes
- We will ask families for their desired option of in-person or online instruction every 1st of the month. (October 1st, November 1st, etc.).
- If you have any concerns with your chosen instructional method at any point, contact the principal’s office.

Question #12 If my child attends school remotely, will I have access to breakfast and lunch?

- Yes. Our Food Service (Nutrition Inc) will communicate a schedule soon.

Question #13 Will there be orientation/open house?

- Yes.
- We are planning a virtual orientation/open house for most grades.
- 7th grade: more information to come. First day of school we will spend time with our 7th grade in more of an “orientation” of the new building, room locations, cafeteria procedures, etc.
- Kindergarten: more information to come.

Question #14 Will you still be using the metal detector?

- Yes!
- Still will use large bag room across from main office for all items larger than a bookbag.

Question #15 What if my child attends NCCTC?

- Vo Tech will be in session on Monday, August 24th.
- Check out their website for more information or reach out to Dr. Catino
- https://www.ncavts.org/ncctc

Question #16 Will there be any privacy issues if I choose the remote/virtual option?

- Students at home ***will only be seen*** by the teacher via Google Meet.
- Students in the physical classroom will ***not*** see the students online.
- Students at home will have the ability to use the Google Chat option within Google Meet to ask their teacher questions.
- Teacher has the immediate ability to remove or mute any student from the Google Meet for any reason.
- Discipline policy is being developed for any issues related to negative behavior online.

Question #17 Will students be 6 feet apart in the classrooms?

- Here is a link that explains that students and staff should maintain 6 feet apart when feasible. When it is not possible for students to be 6 feet apart, they will be wearing masks.
- We are planning on removing things from classrooms that are not 100% necessary to make more space.

https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/HigherEd/Section2/Pages/default.aspx

Question #18 Will there be in person parent meeting, parent-teacher conferences, etc.?

- Our plan is to schedule all meetings virtually to limit the number of people entering the buildings.

Question #19 - Kindergarten

- Kindergarten Screenings will not be conducted this year due to COVID-19.
- Kindergarten Teacher assignment letters will be mailed approximately the 2nd week of August.
- Information regarding Kindergarten Orientation information and options will be forthcoming.

Finally

- Thank you to our administration for all their hard work!
- Reminder to contact us at pandemic-team@mca.k12.pa.us or call your building principal or myself at the district office at 570-339-1500.