



# Mount Carmel Area School District

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I would like to update our learning community on the difficult decisions that our school district has been forced to make over the last few weeks and ultimately the entire school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that our school district believes that face to face in person instruction with MCA teachers is by far the best learning model possible but we have been forced to make learning model decisions while juggling this belief with the overall health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront.

The challenge we continue to face as a school district is how to balance the ever changing regulations and guidelines set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (*Updated November 23, 2020*

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/SchoolClosureRecommendations.aspx>) related to how we can keep our school buildings open for in person instruction and the guidelines that will force our school district to move to virtual instruction. The factors that go into the closing of our schools for full in person instruction include the positivity rate in our local county and community, positive cases in our schools (an additional staff member tested positive today in our elementary school) quarantining staff members, and our ability to properly staff our buildings.

With this in mind, our school district has made the difficult decision to remain in full virtual instruction for our students from Monday, December 14th through the Christmas holiday break which will start on Wednesday, December 23rd.

Our instructional model upon our return from the Christmas holiday break will be decided at a later date.

I know our learning community is looking for consistency but this pandemic that we are living through has made that very difficult. Again, these decisions are agonizing for our school district and we will continue to analyze the factors mentioned in this letter to help guide us through this difficult time.

Please check back to our main school district website for continued updates.

Sincerely,

Pete Cheddar