



October 21, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are now in our second week of bringing back our K-2 students at Gill Hall and McClellan Elementary Schools to full-time, in-person learning. The kids seem extremely excited to be back to school and return to some sense of normalcy. We have had over 90% of our K-2 population choose to come back to the full-time, in-person model. All COVID-19 mitigation efforts have remained in place and seem to be successful in preventing any spread in our schools. We had one positive case at Gill Hall last week that was contracted from a family member. Because we don't have the six feet of physical distance in classrooms, we did have to quarantine seven students after a thorough review of attendance, seating charts, and bus video. Anytime we have a positive case, any student or adult that has been within six feet for 15 minutes or more of the positive case will be notified and must quarantine for 14 days.

As we bring students back to full-time instruction, it is important to remember that any time there is a positive case, other students will more than likely be required to quarantine if they meet the stipulations for being a close contact. We consult with the Allegheny County Health Department on every case to ensure that our actions are consistent with their recommendations. We have also continued to be extremely vigilant with students who leave school sick or are exhibiting symptoms. We require either a doctor's release or negative COVID test, along with improved symptoms before that child is able to return to school. It is in everyone's best interest that parents keep their children at home when they are sick. Also, if a parent has COVID-like symptoms and has been tested, it is imperative that they keep their children home until it is determined that they are negative. We have to continue to adhere to practices that are in the best interest of everyone's health.

In my letter on October 5th, I had outlined a plan that said we would re-evaluate bringing JHIS back after two weeks of Gill Hall being back. Over the past week and a half, we have had three cases (two of them being a sibling group,) and the rate of positive community tests in Jefferson Hills, Pleasant Hills, and West Elizabeth has continued to rise. We still have not seen evidence of any spread in our schools, and almost all transmissions have been from a family member. We realize that the next few months are going to be difficult to navigate because of the seasonal flu and other illnesses that children tend to contract this time of year, but as long as everyone continues to do their part to mitigate the virus and keep an open line of communication, I'm confident we can continue to move ahead with our plans.

After much consideration and analysis, we would like to push back the return date for JHIS students to a later date. This will give us more time to follow local and county trends and prepare spaces throughout the building for our students' return. With over 780 students, JHIS presents a whole different set of challenges than Gill Hall and McClellan. It is still our goal to get JHIS back to five days a week before Thanksgiving break.

Even though the PCR test positivity rate is still in the low range and has gone down in the last week, I am slightly concerned that we had almost 20 positive community cases between Jefferson Hills, Pleasant Hills, and West Elizabeth in the last week. We don't completely know what impact that will have on our schools, and tracking those cases for another week will allow us additional time to make a more informed decision. Thus far, we have seen slightly less cases in our schools in October than we did in September. If we see little to no residual spillover into schools and key metrics stabilize and/or go down, we will continue our plan of bringing the other buildings back to five days a week of in-person instruction; however, if key metrics continue to rise, and we see spillover into our schools, we will continue to wait to bring any more buildings back to five days a week.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you ever have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Ghilani". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Dr. Michael P. Ghilani
Superintendent of Schools