



## Superintendent's Report

November 24, 2020

6:00p.m.

As we approach the Thanksgiving break, in this unprecedented time in our country's history, we have so many things for which to be grateful. I extend special heartfelt thanks to our Learning Community for your commitment and service to our students and families. You have managed to make shifts and made thoughtful responses to an evolving and constantly changing situation. I commend you for continuing to stay the course despite the uncertainty and difficulties at times. Your sacrifice and gifts of time and talent are second to none, and I am honored to serve with you.

During this Thanksgiving holiday, we understand that you will want to spend time with your loved ones. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that traveling may increase your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19 and would strongly recommend that people do not travel for the Thanksgiving holiday. As COVID-19 cases continue to rise, the safest and best way to protect yourself would be to postpone travel and celebrate at home with those in your household or by hosting a virtual celebration. It is also important to remember that small gatherings contribute to the rise in COVID-19 cases nationwide.

As you congregate with your friends and loved ones, please remember to:

- Wear a face covering (mask) whenever there is a likelihood that you will be in the presence of others.
- Maintain social distancing (at least 6 feet) between yourself and others to the maximum extent possible.
- Wash your hands frequently, using soap and hot water, wash for about 20 seconds. Be sure also to cleanse your fingertips. When soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

I am not sure that all of you are aware of the four new mitigation efforts which Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine, announced on Tuesday, November 17, 2020. The efforts include: [Protecting Our Health Care Systems](#), [Traveler Testing](#), a [Strengthened Masking Order](#), and recommendations for [Colleges and Universities](#). Each order is hyperlinked in the event you would like to read them in their entirety. Specifically, I wanted to bring your attention to the masking and travel orders.

As a community, we need to continue to be vigilant about the new updated *Masking Order*. This order mandates the following:

- Masks must be worn indoors and outdoors if you are away from your home. This includes all school buildings.
- Masks must be worn outdoors if you cannot remain at least six feet away from someone not in your household the entire time you are outdoors.
- Masks are required indoors, even if you are more than six feet apart from members not in your household.

*The Travel Order*, especially at this time of year, is more complex. It states that, “Pennsylvanians visiting other states must have a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours prior to their return, or else they need to quarantine for 14 days.” Clearly, these guidelines present a challenge during the holidays when all of us desperately want to visit with friends and family. However, the Department of Health is hoping that by staying home and limiting the number of folks with whom we interact, we will help to curb the spread of COVID-19.

We encourage everyone’s cautiousness and ask that you avoid social events in addition to making an effort to stay in state. If you do host or attend a holiday gathering, please wear a mask when indoors and keep a distance from people not in your household. Similarly, if you do travel, follow the guidelines to return; however, in the absence of a test, the required 14-day quarantine would have a negative impact on you, our students, and potentially our colleagues. Since, anyone who travels is ignoring the order of the Department of Health, individuals would need to use their personal sick time while quarantining at home.

The year 2020 will remain a year of historic significance, and as a result, let us accept the extraordinary circumstances that it has presented and change our planning accordingly. Please stay home and limit your interactions over Thanksgiving. Our students need you. I will urge our students and families to do the same in a separate communication.

Wishing you a healthy and safe Thanksgiving!

Below please find some commendations and announcements:

### **STEM Student Presentation**

Thank you to the STEM Academy Family, Dr. Hamer, Mr. Bell, Ms. Merto, Mr. Smith and CTE students for your hard work preparing for the Receiver’s Meeting. Special thanks to our dynamic, creative and sensational students:

- Markayla Holmes (Communications Technologies, Junior)
- Ashley Bartolon (Communications Technologies, Junior)
- Kamani Johns (Engineering, Senior)
- Samantha Fearrington (Engineering, Senior)

Great job on creating the video!

## **I. Learning and Teaching**

- **Report Card Conferences** - Chester Upland School District conducted report card conferences on November 19, 2020. If a parent/guardian was not able to attend the conference, they are welcome to schedule an alternate time with their child's teacher or school principal.
- **Academic Fun Night** - Chester Upland School District is excited to announce that we will host an Academic Fun Night on December 9, 2020 from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. The event will include fun activities for students and opportunities for students and parents to win prizes. We hope to see all of our students participate. The school with the highest attendance will win a prize! Please visit the Chester Upland School District website for more details.
- **The Hour of Code** - takes place each year during Computer Science Education Week. The 2020 Computer Science Education Week is scheduled during the week of December 7, 2020. Coding involves creating instructions for computers using programming languages and is required to program websites, apps, and other technologies we use every day. Many of the best careers in technology require coding. Teachers and parents can access the Hour of Code Activities from Code.org.
- **Facetime with the Superintendent**- Face Time with the Superintendent will be launched on Monday, November 23, 2020 from 11a.m. - 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. During this session, student leaders will share their thoughts and insights as related to the strengths and areas of growth for the Chester Upland School District. These sessions will take place on a monthly basis as a way to build relationships with students and to foster social justice and enlist students in the decision making in our district improvement efforts.
- **Virtual After School Program** - Chester Upland School District is excited to offer virtual after school activities for students in grades K-12. Programming consists of academic supports, college and/or career exploration, credit recovery for high school students to stay on track for graduation, social and emotional wellness initiatives, and a range of programs that connect learning and fun. Our exciting offerings include: Cooking, cosmetology, robotics, music, art, entrepreneurship, and chess.
- Upcoming recruitment efforts include: *Open Houses* for students and parents to demonstrate and discuss what's offered; engagement of parents during next week's report card conferences; on-going class tag, email, and Google classroom messaging coordinated by school coordinators; school-based robo-calls; direct contact to families from school coordinators, teachers, and contracted providers that have connections with students.
- For the current year, we are adding students daily and are in the midst of aggressive recruitment efforts, so those numbers will continue to increase. We will provide bi-weekly updates to you.

## **II. Family and Community Engagement and Empowerment**

### **Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council**

- The Superintendent will convene a group of parents to serve on the Superintendents Parent Advisory Council (SPAC). The mission of the Superintendent Parent Advisory Council is to support parents in navigating the educational process. Further, the aim of the Superintendents' SPAC is to build social capital, promote and increase parental engagement and empowerment in schools, boost academic achievement while closing performance gaps, and reform the perception of schools by building trust amongst parents and the community.
- The Superintendents Parent Advisory Council (SPAC) will meet quarterly and will serve as an advisory board to identify the needs and goals among the parents of students enrolled in the Chester Upland School District. The SPAC will provide feedback and insight from the parent's perspective on the schooling experience and assist with supporting the District with meeting the goals in the Financial Recovery Plan and overall district improvement efforts.
- The makeup of the SPAC will include two elementary school parents or guardians and three parents or guardians from middle school and each high school.

## **III. Organizational Efficiencies and Effectiveness**

### **District Health & Safety Team**

- In response to COVID 19, the District has created a District Health and Safety Team. The purpose of the District Health and Safety is to provide case management for potential or confirmed COVID 10 cases. The members of the team include the following: Mr. Simonson, Pandemic Coordinator, Dr. Chambers, Director of Human Resources, Dr. Murrin, Director of Student Support Services, Nurse Lee, Contract Tracing Nurse and Dr. Flannery CCIU Project Director.
- The Director of Human Resources will convene the District Health and Safety Team when an employee reports symptoms, close contact, or a confirmed case of COVID-19. The Team will research and gather facts. The Team will review communication with Superintendent to be shared with our learning community regarding any probable or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within district. The Director of Human Resources will update the COVID 19 Tracker and share with the Instructional Technology Team to update on the website.
- The Contact Tracing Nurse will contact the impacted employee and prepare a disease report for Chester County Health Department (CCHD) —within 24 hours. The form has a 'submit' button embedded, which goes directly to the CCHD's que once submitted. This form must be completed in its entirety to initiate the investigation process—contract

tracing is a component of the investigation. In the event where the nurse cannot connect with the employee immediately, the nurse will work with Human Resources to complete the form with as much information we have at the time. The form is submitted to CCHD with a follow up to provide additional information to the Health Department.

- The Pandemic Coordinator will keep team abreast of COVID-19 updates as informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC) and the Chester County Health Department.

### **Finances**

- To date the Business Office has compiled reports detailing all salaries and benefits data for the District. They have started to review the prior year's budget and continue to work on budget mitigation efforts. The Finance Team will update the Budget Timeline to include broader stakeholder engagement no later than November 25, 2020.

### **Meal Distribution**

- Meal distribution will occur on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Chester High School only.

Your Superintendent,

Dr. Carol D. Birks