



January 6, 2021

Dear Golden Eagle Families:

Once again, COVID-19 has put the Somerset Area School District—and many other Districts around the region and state—in an extremely difficult position. Given the impact of the virus on faculty, staff, and administration, coupled with the mandates and recommendations from the Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Education, consistent in-person education has been made nearly impossible.

The District had originally planned for students to return to in-person learning on January 12, 2021; however, because of the significant and growing number of District employees who are quarantined, isolated, or hospitalized due to COVID-19 and because Somerset County remains in substantial COVID-19 community transmission status, the District is forced to delay that return until **February 10, 2021**.

Even if students could return to in-person learning today, the current numbers of faculty and staff cases would require schools to close tomorrow. If they returned at this time, it is highly likely that our Golden Eagles would experience a roller coaster of in-person and remote learning. The constant movement from in-person to remote learning and back—based on the State's directives to close as positive cases are reported—creates a tremendously inconsistent learning experience for students.

At this time, the District is hopeful for a February 10, 2021 return to full, in-person learning for the families who have selected that option; however, a hybrid, or part-time, return may become the best bet to get students back to in-person learning while meeting the requirement to provide social distancing in our school buildings. ***In the next few days, the District will survey families for input about several items, including what types of hybrid (or part-time) schedules would best suit their family schedules---just in case that information is needed. Please be on the lookout for a link to that survey in Schoology.***

We know the best place for our Golden Eagles to learn is in their schools, in-person, with their teachers--safely. We promise to get them back to school when this recent surge among faculty and staff COVID issues has passed and as soon as the District can abide by the ever-changing safety requirements from the State.

We love and miss seeing our Golden Eagles in person. We greatly appreciate their patience, resilience, and understanding—more than we can adequately express.

We encourage you to contact your child's school if you have any questions, communicate with your child's teachers, encourage your child to engage in his/her classes, and take advantage of the District's free tutoring opportunities for your child if he/she needs assistance. We are here to help our Golden Eagles and know that together, we can get through this!

Sincerely,

The Somerset Area School District