

**Avonworth School Board Meeting  
Public Questions and Written Responses  
August 3, 2020**

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**Daniel Vosler 08:17 PM**

**Will MSDSs be made available for the disinfectants, sanitizers, et cetera that will be used in areas the students exposed to?**

Yes. We have this information and certainly are willing to share. Links are provided below and we will also post this information on our [website](#) in the Coronavirus updates.

[Safety Data Sheet #1](#)

[Safety Data Sheet #2](#)

**Ben Erdeljac 08:46 PM**

**I appreciate the information about keeping the HVAC system on “occupied” at all times to ensure fresh air intake. What percent of fresh air does the HVAC systems in each building have? My limited understanding is that this percent of fresh air intake can range from 10-30%.**

The minimum amount of fresh air being drawn into the HVAC system is 10%. The system is set to fluctuate and draw more fresh air based on various factors such as outside air temperature. When school resumes, the system will be set on the occupied mode at all times, which will circulate fresh air 24 hours a day.

**Michele 08:46 PM**

**Was there any consideration to have the middle school run on the half-day am/pm model as opposed to the hybrid to allow for core academic classes to be held in-person daily then allowing the special area classes, lunch, and band/chorus/etc virtually? Or having longer block core academics during in-person days and the special area classes on virtual days?**

Yes. Considerations were given to many different models and the hybrid decided on was deemed the best educational option for students.

**Clarence 08:47 PM**

**What if the virtual model is not working out for the student? What is the process for requesting a different model?**

Please contact your child's building principal to discuss possible remedies. These situations will be considered on a case by case basis.

**Sarah Chverchko 08:47 PM**

**What happens if students want to transition into the half-day model from the virtual model, but that addition of students will prevent the 6-foot distancing?**

Because of the number of students enrolled in both programs, we do have a good bit of flexibility and do not believe this will be an issue.

**Mike 08:48 PM**

**What happens on Wed? Can you please review this? No instructions appear to be happening. Is this just a full day of answering questions?**

On Wednesdays, teachers will be holding office hours to answer student questions. They will also be preparing their lessons for the lessons for students when they are working from home in the virtual environment.

**Nicole Hahna 08:49 PM**

**I request that the board reconsider the "mask break" as it sends an unclear message to young children who view teachers in a position of authority. I request that the policy is for students, teachers, staff, and administration to wear a mask AND remain 6 feet apart.**

Thank you. The District intends to follow the guidance provided in the PA Order regarding face coverings. Teachers will be provided with clear direction with regard to the expectations for face coverings in school.

**Mike 08:49 PM**

**How is public feedback/questions on this plan addressed and posted to the public? I have seen some requests for comment in the past week, but no posting of the input from parents. When will that be provided?**

An [FAQ document](#) that addresses many questions or concerns from the public was released to school district families on Monday, August 3. It is posted to the School District website.

**O'Neil Family 08:50 PM**

**When developing the hybrid model for the elementary students, how was the risk to students who may not have a caregiver who can facilitate the half-day or full-day virtual assessed?**

The concern about childcare is inevitable in any model that does not provide for students being in school all day, every day. The District used two primary factors when considering the model that was most appropriate: what is safe for students and staff and what is most educationally sound.

**Phillippi, Julie Anne 08:50 PM**

**Will there be standardized testing or other metrics to assess learning this year under the new model(s)?**

Yes, at this time the Pennsylvania Department of Education intends on facilitating the annual standardized tests for Pennsylvania's schools.

**Mike 08:50 PM**

**How will the effectiveness of this educational plan be evaluated?**

We will be monitoring the progress of our students through the classroom assessments they complete. We will also hold discussions with stakeholders regarding their impressions of the effectiveness of the educational plan.

**Keyaira 08:52 PM**

**Will the marching band and the Avonnettes be performing during the football game? Also, will after school clubs still be happening?**

Currently, we do not know the status of the marching band and Avonnettes performing at football games. The Department of Health has an order that restricts outdoor gatherings to no more than 50 people. We are awaiting further guidance from the PIAA and WPIAL.

**Anne Sweeney McGrath 08:55 PM**

**Is there a committee of the School Board dedicated to the Special Needs students? If so, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with them.**

We do not have a committee that is solely dedicated to special needs students. The committee most closely aligned with special education would be the curriculum committee. The curriculum

committee meets monthly at 6:30 p.m. prior to the second board meeting of the month. Dr. Jeff Hadley, Avonworth Assistant Superintendent, builds the agenda for the meeting. If you wish to be added to the committee agenda, please contact Dr. Hadley.

**Anonymous Attendee 08:56 PM**

**Thank you for all your hard work! Everything seems reasonable considering this awful and difficult situation.**

Thank you for your kind words.

**Laura 08:56 PM**

**One of the metrics mentioned was a 14-day decline in cases. We have clearly not seen this happen in Allegheny county yet and unless something changes dramatically this week, we will not see this happen before a decision needs to be made. Can we assume that if this does not happen, can we assume that the entire district will begin virtually?**

Not necessarily. The metrics will be used when considering the models that may be implemented. However, all the metrics do not necessarily have to be met for a certain model to be decided upon.

**Mike 08:57 PM**

**So if all questions cannot be answered tonight, how will they be answered and incorporated into the plan and revisions rolled out....all by the 10th??**

This transcript provides the questions and answers to the questions asked in the chat and Q&A during the Board meeting on August 3. All questions asked, comments, and feedback provided is taken into consideration as the District continues to develop its Return to School Plan.

**Jessica Johnston 08:58 PM**

**Can you please talk through the strategy for teacher staffing now that the responses to the request for virtual learning have been counted? Have teachers expressed a preference for teaching in-person vs. being full online? Also, is there any concern about teachers not wanting to return to in-person instruction at the start of school given the risks of the virus. Do you anticipate having adequate teacher staffing for the first day of school?**

The administration will review the commitments to the Avonworth Virtual Academy and adjust staffing as needed to staff both the virtual academy and in-person instruction. The District has

been in communication with teachers regarding the return to school and the models of instruction that the district may operate to begin the 2020-2021 school year.

**Mike 08:59 PM**

**What is the increased cost of this plan? Are the financials of this plan available for public review? I have not seen them.**

The District Administration is working out costs associated with our Return to School Plan and will be shared with the Board at the public Board meeting on August 10, 2020.

**Mike 09:00 PM**

**Seems like risks have been identified, such as "no nurses" or "no bus drivers". What is the mitigation plan for these risks? What other risks have been identified?**

Any staff that cannot be present may create issues with operating in person with students. This would include nurses, bus drivers, teachers, etc. Substitute staff will be utilized for vacancies to mitigate these circumstances. If the number of vacancies exceeds the District's ability to staff critical positions for operation purposes, the District will need to consider closing buildings and or the District and returning to full, virtual instruction.

**Mike 09:02 PM**

**This was noted as a "fluid" plan. Who is in control of the changes to the plan? Are revisions to the plan voted on by the school board?**

There were two different plans discussed this evening. The [Health & Safety Plan](#) required by the Pennsylvania Department was reviewed and approved by the Avonworth Board of School Directors at the 8/3/2020 meeting. Dr. Ralston and the Board also discussed the possible return to school models. District Administration will continue to review all plans that are in place as the situation with COVID-19 changes. Any changes to our operational or safety plan will be driven by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny County Health Department guidelines. The Superintendent will have the authority to make changes to the District's operational plan.

**Sarah Chverchko 09:02 PM**

**Will there be proof required to the school administration if a child has a medical condition preventing wearing a mask? I understand for privacy purposes it can't be shared, but can we assume that if a child is not wearing a mask, that there is documented proof on file?**

Yes, according to the [PA Order on Face Coverings](#), schools may require such students to provide medical documentation. PDE recommends that any documentation that is provided be in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA of such medical or mental health conditions or disability. In order to be exempt from wearing a face covering, medical documentation will be required.

**Nicole Smith 08:59 PM**

**Where and how will PM APC and AES students eat lunch?**

In the half-day model that the District is considering for APC and AES, students will not need to eat lunch in the building. However, bag lunches will be made available for students to take home after the AM session and for any student that wishes to eat lunch when they arrive for the PM session. Each building will make an adequate space available for eating lunch with the appropriate spacing provided between students. The cafeteria may be used as well any additional spaces needed to appropriately accommodate the safe spacing of students.

**From Jenna Paulat to All panelists: (7:41 PM)**

**I just wanted to see if you could clarify the quarantine and isolation policies under the hybrid model. I see that anyone who tests positive for COVID has a minimum of 10 days of isolation. And anyone (staff or students) who is in contact with a COVID + person is asked to self-isolate for 14 days. Does this imply that if someone in a class tests positive, would the entire class and teacher self isolate for 14 days? Or is there a different definition for "in contact"? Thanks!**

According to guidance provided by the Allegheny County Department of Health, individuals are considered exposed if they have been in contact for at least fifteen minutes within six feet without a mask with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. While we will utilize this guidance, if someone in our schools tests positive, we will exercise caution and contact the Allegheny Department of Health and follow their specific guidance for each situation.

**From Abby Van Korlaar to All panelists: (8:02 PM)**

**Thankful for each of you! I know these are terribly difficult decisions. GRACE UPON GRACE UPON GRACE to you!**

Thank you for your kind words.

**From Val to All panelists: (8:02 PM)**

**Hi, will the school be fogged/sanitized if a positive case is identified in the building?**

The District has purchased Emist Electrostatic sprayers that will be used to sanitize each building nightly. In the event of a positive case, the District will follow the recommendations of the Allegheny County of Health which may include blocking off a space for a certain amount of time and then cleaning and sanitizing the space. The Emist Electrostatic sprayer would also be used to sanitize this space.

**From melissa Ursu to All panelists: (8:02 PM)**

**late so don't know if asked. how many rooms need to be cleaned in 90 minutes?**

Students in the primary and elementary buildings will remain in their classrooms for instruction. We have not completed all staffing yet, but the approximate number of rooms will be 20 at the elementary and 18 at the primary center.

**From Anne Blaser to All panelists: (8:04 PM)**

**Just wondering how you will clean the high school classrooms between classes, will this be possible**

Cleaning supplies will be made available in classrooms. The teacher will have the opportunity to clean surfaces between classes and may ask willing students to assist.

**From Tracy Cassidy to All panelists: (8:05 PM)**

**Can you please talk about what the 100% virtual will look like for kids? I have concerns that it will look like it did in the spring. We don't feel safe with our kids returning but are very concerned that they will fall behind if they aren't receiving the level of education the hybrid kids are. thank you for all that you are doing!**

The Avonworth Virtual Academy will be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences. The first week of June, our teachers received professional learning to better prepare them to teach online. The teachers learned about various tools and strategies that they can use to teach online effectively. We are very confident that our teachers will do a great job in this model.

**From Tracy Cassidy to All panelists: (8:14 PM)**

**What percentage of parents picked all virtual? Thanks.**

19% selected the all virtual option.

**From melissa ursu to All panelists: (8:17 PM)**

**will the delay in faucets delay in-person learning?**

The delay in delivery of the touchless faucets will not delay the start of the school year and in-person instruction should the K-6 half-day/ 7-12 hybrid model be selected. The current faucets will be frequently cleaned and disinfected during the day and evening.

**From Adrienne Leveto to All panelists: (8:18 PM)**

**If the air units are of a great importance, have the primary center's air conditioners been checked? The Kindergarten hallways has had their air units break multiple times for sometimes half a day, but other times multiple days in a row. What will happen if the air is not working as it has before?**

Every effort will be made to ensure the air conditioning units are in good working order. Advice from health organizations is to also circulate outside air by keeping windows open or holding class outside. We will consider all options to provide a safe environment.

**From Tracy Cassidy to All panelists: (8:29 PM)**

**While I really appreciate all of this planning but when it all comes down to it it really isn't safe to open now. Look at the news. Things are starting to open for young people and the virus is spreading quickly. I ask the board to please hit pause and wait 9 weeks and see what happens. Kids need to get back to "normal" and taking risks like this has the potential to prolong this pandemic.**

Thank you for sharing your opinion regarding delaying the start of in-person instruction 9-weeks.

**From Hannah Valeriano to All panelists: (8:37 PM)**

**How often will these plans be re-evaluated? only every 9 weeks? Only if the government changes its regulations? Monthly?**

The situation with COVID-19 as it relates to the operation of our schools is evaluated daily. The Superintendent also attends a weekly call with school leaders and officials from the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Doctors from the Allegheny County Health Department join these calls to review the current impact of COVID-19 in Allegheny County. District administrators also continually review any updated guidance from local and national health officials, as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Any decisions or changes regarding our District's operational or Health & Safety Plan will be driven by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny County Health Department guidelines.

**From Geist to All panelists: (8:43 PM)**

**If my child returns to school after the first 9 weeks, who will their teacher be? Will they be assigned a teacher other than the Virtual Teacher for them to return to?**

The assignment of teachers at the K-6 level is currently being worked on. The final assignment of teachers will be determined by the model chosen for the District to return to school. Soon after the model is chosen for the return to school, building principals will be communicating with families regarding teacher assignments for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

**From Chinar Aphale to All panelists: (8:45 PM)**

**Would the students enroll for the hybrid model at the start of the school year have the opportunity to switch to a virtual model after 9 weeks?**

Yes. We ask that families commit to 9 weeks in the model chosen for the beginning of the school year. We ask this for student consistency and also because of the impact these changes may have on staffing. At each 9-week marking period, families will have the opportunity to change from the in-person model to the virtual model and vice versa.

**From Carly Molchen to All panelists: (8:48 PM)**

**What does the teachers union think of the current plan?**

These questions are being responded to by our administration and we cannot speak on behalf of the union as a whole or for individual teachers. It is important to note that representatives from the teachers and support staff have been involved in back to school planning. Likewise, the feedback has been gathered from all district stakeholders as a response to this crisis has been planned.

**From melissa ursu to All panelists: (8:52 PM)**

**is there any concern that the cdc recommendations are biased politically?**

We not only follow guidance by the CDC, but also work closely with the Allegheny County Department of Health and the Allegheny Health Network. The guidance from all of these professional organizations has been consistent.

**Would you consider splitting the AM/PM groups by bus routes instead to limit the amount on buses?**

The number of students on our buses will be reduced by half given the K-6 Half-Day and 7-12 Hybrid models. Also, approximately 50% of our parents/guardians have stated they are able to and plan to drive their child(ren) to school this school year. This should also significantly reduce the number of students on our buses.

**Mike 09:03 PM**

**Is the board going to vote on a plan that you don't know what the costs are??**

The Board will be presented with financial information at the Board meeting on Monday, August 10 regarding the operational models for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Carol 09:03 PM**

**If the board doesn't think they have time to answer all questions, I request that a written response be provided to each question and the responses be posted in the FAQs section on the Avonworth website.**

This document will be posted on the [Districts website](#) once completed.

**Unsure of who posted this question:**

**What will be considered appropriate and inappropriate masks?**

The District will follow what the [Pennsylvania Department of Education has described as an appropriate face covering under the Department of Health's Order Regarding Universal Face Coverings](#).

**Sarah Chverchko 09:02 PM**

**Will there be proof required to the school administration if a child has a medical condition preventing wearing a mask? I understand for privacy purposes it can't be shared, but can we assume that if a child is not wearing a mask, that there is documented proof on file?**

We are currently consulting with our District's solicitor regarding this question. Once we have this information, we will share it with our school community.

**Anonymous Attendee 07:42 PM**

**Regarding the return to school plan. If the plan that is picked for the child does not seem to be working well can one of the alternative options be selected for the child to follow? 2nd question will virtual sessions have the teacher involved visually and interacting with the child(ren), this would be a first-grade child? Thank you.**

We are asking that families commit to 9-weeks in the model chosen. This is important for consistency and also because changes to teacher rosters could impact staffing. If an extenuating circumstance develops, we ask that you contact your child's building principal to discuss options.

At the primary level, virtual learning will be a mix of asynchronous learning and synchronous learning. This means that some learning will be accessed and completed independently. There will also be some live sessions scheduled that students may attend. In these sessions, the student will be able to interact with his or her teacher, as well as classmates.

**Anonymous Attendee 07:46 PM**

**Based on your meetings with other local superintendents - has there been any consideration to pushing back the school start date or moving to full virtual like some other local districts?**

There are a variety of actions being taken by other school districts. Some are moving back their start dates and others are not. The reasons for moving the start date vary from district to district. The same goes for districts considering or having already committed to full virtual to start the school year. Some have made this decision and some have not and each decision is made based on what each individual community is experiencing.

**Amanda Berneburg 07:57 PM**

**Just wanted to tell the administration how impressed I've been with your planning and diligence. You are not public health officials, however, it's clear that you're being put in the position to make these important decisions. We appreciate it so much. Thank you.  
-Amanda Berneburg**

Thank you for your kind words.

**Anonymous Attendee 07:59 PM**

**For primary and elementary, how will sanitization be done in such a short window between AM and PM sessions? When the high school has a full day of cleaning between groups?**

We will have approximately 18 classrooms at the primary and 20 at the elementary to clean. Supplies will be made available in each room. Teachers and/or custodians will be able to clean the high touch surfaces, desks, etc. during the time between AM and PM.

**Ben Erdeljac 08:03 PM**

**When is Avonworth planning to officially vote on what capacity the district will start the school year?**

On or before August 10, Dr. Ralston will be sending a message to the school community regarding his recommendation for the operational model the District should utilize to begin the 2020-2021 school year. Dr. Ralston will also present this recommendation at the August 10 School Board meeting.

**Anne Sweeney McGrath 08:03 PM**

**I am concerned about the District's decision to cut the funding for the primary/elementary Special Needs students. Canceling the contract with Pittsburgh Behavioral Services in favor of an inferior free program provided by the state is extremely disturbing. The special needs students have already been severely underserved by the District during the COVID pandemic and now you are continuing to fail them by canceling programming that has proven to be beneficial for these students. Is this decision one that you would be willing to reconsider**

Avonworth School District will partner with the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)'s Autism Initiative this academic year. Pittsburgh Behavioral Services will be available on a consultative basis, however, the Autism Initiative offers parallel services related to Applied Behavior Analysis and works in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Bureau of Special Education, and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU3) at no cost to the district. Resources available through these agencies will provide training and support to teachers and paraprofessionals. Since the inception of the Applied Behavior Analysis methodology with the Pittsburgh Behavioral Service team two years ago, teachers have completed the PaTTAN initial training as well as the advanced training to implement this program. PaTTAN's continued support will promote growth and collaboration between students, faculty, and staff.

**Laura 08:11 PM**

**If none of the models are ideal, why would we not choose the model that ensures the health and safety of our children, teachers, and community? The 100% virtual model is the only option that we can confidently say will mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We have seen numerous cases lately of large scale gatherings of children at camps and schools in various places that have led to significant outbreaks.**

Thank you for your comment. The District's administration will continue to consider the recommendations and guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny

County Health Department guidelines when making decisions regarding our operational model, as well as Health & Safety Plan.

**Matt Meyer 08:43 PM**

**How are the teachers feeling about the re-opening? We need to consider their voices along with the concerns of us (parents/students)?**

These questions are being responded to by our administration and we cannot speak on behalf of the union as a whole or for individual teachers. The teachers and support staff have been involved with the reopening planning process and we have taken time to gather the feedback from all stakeholders.

**Michele 08:46 PM**

**Was there any consideration to have the middle school run on a half-day am/pm model as opposed to the hybrid to allow for core academic classes to be held in-person daily then allowing the special area classes, lunch, and band/chorus/etc virtually? Or having longer block core academics during in-person days and the special area classes on virtual days?**

Yes. We considered many possible models through our planning process. The hybrid model chosen for 7-12 is what works for scheduling and staff utilization as we have many shared teachers between the middle school and high school.

**Clarence 08:47 PM**

**What if the virtual model is not working out for the student? What is the process for requesting a different model?**

We are asking that families commit to 9-weeks in the model chosen. This is important for consistency and also because changes to teacher rosters could impact staffing. If an extenuating circumstance develops, we ask that you contact your child's building principal to discuss options.

**Anonymous Attendee 08:47 PM**

**Some questions are hard to hear, can the school board members unmute themselves when asking a question? Thank you.**

We apologize for this. We will continue to do our best in this format for Board meetings to ensure all comments can be heard. Thank you.

**Sarah Chverchko 08:47 PM**

**What happens if students want to transition into the half-day model from the virtual model, but that addition of students will prevent the 6-foot distancing?**

This is one of the reasons we are asking that families commit to 9-weeks in the model chosen. This will allow us to evaluate changes to teacher rosters and ensure we continue to maintain the recommendations of 6 feet between students in our classrooms. In the half-day and hybrid models, we are committed to adhering to the 6ft distancing recommendations.

**Mike 08:48 PM**

**What happens on Wed? Can you please review this? No instructions appear to be happening. Is this just a full day of answering questions?**

No students will report to school on Wednesday at the secondary level. At the secondary level, our teachers will instruct students in-person four days a week, with students divided into two separate groups. They are also responsible for providing asynchronous instruction/learning for students on the days they are not in school. It is critical that we provide our students with an opportunity to connect with our teachers regarding their asynchronous, online learning. During this time, teachers will hold office hours so that students can meet with teachers virtually if they choose to. Students will be able to meet with teachers virtually during office hours to have concepts reviewed, ask questions, get support, etc. The time on Wednesday will also be used to plan instruction for in-person as well as online.

**Anonymous Attendee 08:49 PM**

**Will Dr. Ralston be making a recommendation ??**

Yes. Dr. Ralston will be making a recommendation on or before August 10, 2020.

**Nicole Hahna 08:49 PM**

**I request that the board reconsider the “mask break” as it sends an unclear message to young children who view teachers in a position of authority. I request that the policy is for students, teachers, staff, and administration to wear a mask AND remain 6 feet apart.**

District administration will continue to rely on the [guidance and recommendations](#) provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny County Health Department guidelines regarding face coverings.

**Mike 08:49 PM**

**How is public feedback/questions on this plan addressed and posted to the public? I have seen some requests for comment in the past week, but no posting of the input from parents. When will that be provided?**

The public feedback and questions in the chat and Q&A during the August 3, 2020, School Board meeting have been recorded in this document along with responses from our administration. This document will be sent to those that registered for the August 3, 2020 Board meeting and also posted on the District's website.

**Todd 11:25 PM**

**How will the tables and chairs be arranged at the**

Tables/desks and chairs will be arranged per the guidelines and recommendations of health officials, which have indicated they should be facing the same direction and with students seated 6 feet apart.

**chekan 09:06 PM**

**August 26 is a Wednesday (the all-home day in the hybrid model). Is that going to be the actual first day or do you think it will change?**

The District is considering a change to the start date of the school year. If a change is going to be recommended, this will be included in Dr. Ralston's communication regarding the model he recommends for the start of the year. If we start in the hybrid model, we will also provide clear communication with regard to the days students will attend at the beginning of the school year to ensure a smooth transition into the model.

**Mike 09:07 PM**

**What support exists for working parents when their kids are required to be at home?**

The District will not have space or staffing to provide childcare support during the times students would not be in attendance at school.

**Jason Greathouse 09:07 PM**

**If you're not going to provide full all-day education, which is what you do best, why should I choose Avonworth over something like PA cyber?**

We believe that the best education a child can receive is from Avonworth teachers and through the Avonworth curriculum. Avonworth teachers are trained in our curriculum and programs and can provide the personal connection students need for learning. Avonworth also provides a curriculum using the highest-rated programs and is designed by Avonworth teachers with our students' best interests in mind. Our teachers are dedicated to Avonworth students and providing them with the best quality education possible. Attending Avonworth in any model also continues to keep students connected to our district, classmates, district programs, district services, etc.

**Megan Butsko 09:08 PM**

**I have 2 questions:**

**1. I wanted to understand how you are sanitizing the entire school between am and pm sessions.**

We will have approximately 18 classrooms at the primary and 20 at the elementary to clean. Supplies will be made available in each room. Teachers and/or custodians will be able to clean the high touch surfaces, desks, etc. during the time between AM and PM.

**2. Why are the younger kids not getting the option to do 2 days in person, 3 online? Doesn't that make sense for everyone and keep everyone better protected from cross-contamination from the groups and give more time to clean?**

We did consider the 2 days in person, 3 online for the K-6 students. However, for maximum academic growth for our youngest students, it is better for them to attend daily for critical foundational learning in reading and math.

Our District administrators are not scientists or health officials. Therefore, we continue to stay connected with scientists and health officials to get their input, guidance, and recommendations. During a call with scientists and doctors from the Allegheny Health Network on 8/5/2020, it was stated that the current science on COVID-19 transmission shows that this virus is spread through aerosolized droplets when in prolonged, close contact with an infected person. It was stated that the best way to minimize risk is through proper distancing and face coverings. However, it was also stated that cleaning and sanitizing helps to minimize risk, which we will also do.

**O'Neil Family 09:09 PM**

**Is there a plan being made to be reactive to changing circumstances to work towards getting students back to school in the building full time?**

The [Return To School Plan](#) includes all of the operational models our schools may operate in during the 2020-2021 school year. We will continue to respond to the changing circumstances and the guidance and recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny County Health Department guidelines.

**Mike 09:10 PM**

**You mention "other expertise" is be involved. What expertise are you referring to?**

The District administration is in contact weekly with officials at the Allegheny County Health Department. The District administration will rely on these health experts, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, and Pennsylvania Department of Education if any change to our operational model and/or Health and Safety Plan is considered.

**Mike 09:11 PM**

**Who represents that expertise?**

The District administration is in contact weekly with officials at the Allegheny County Health Department. The District administration will rely on these health experts, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, and Pennsylvania Department of Education as we consider changes to our operational model and/or Health and Safety Plan.

**From Alaina Schrader to All panelists: (9:12 PM)**

**Would that be the start for staff or students or both that get adjusted?**

If the start date is adjusted for students, the staff will still start as scheduled.

**Abby Van Korlaar 09:14 PM**

**How would virtual academy students take state assessments?**

Last school year, state assessments were canceled due to the pandemic and school closures. We would anticipate this to be a possibility again this school year as schools are still adjusting and delivering learning in new ways as we respond to the challenges posed by this virus. If the

state were to require testing, we would expect guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education regarding our students that are attending virtually. Considering the strict procedures we need to take when administering state assessments, it would be hard to imagine they would permit students to take these assessments at home.

**Mike 09:14 PM**

**Will this plan provide equivalent education to a 5 day in school classes?**

School districts in the Commonwealth are required to meet the 180 days and 900 hours (elementary)/990 hours (secondary) requirements. However, the [Pennsylvania Department of Education has recognized the challenges schools may face during the 2020-2021 school year](#) as a result of this pandemic. Therefore, PDE has revised these requirements and has provided flexibility to districts. In the models we have proposed, the District will still meet these requirements but will do so with a combination of in-person and online instruction/learning.

**Anonymous Attendee 09:15 PM**

**Is Dr. Ralston's recommendation that we start on a hybrid schedule and not virtually???**

On or before August 10, Dr. Ralston will announce his recommendation for the start of the school year.

**sorry if this was discussed. I joined late. are the kids required to be online at 8 am for their virtual days and end at 3 pm like a regular school day instead of making their own schedule?**

No. The virtual program will be a combination of independent learning and also synchronous learning time. Students will be able to work through assignments and activities posted by their teachers at their own pace and at a time convenient for them. For students in the 100% virtual program, teachers will also schedule live sessions to connect with students and provide instruction.

**Mike 09:17 PM**

**Where can follow-up questions be sent?**

Follow-up questions can be sent to any of our District administrators.

**O'Neil Family 09:19 PM**

**Has it been considered to upgrade technology in the Avonworth Buildings rather than spend budget on third-party providers?**

The District is not in favor of using a third-party provider for virtual learning.

**Mike 09:23 PM**

**Will the actual answers to these questions be posted in the FAQ?**

Yes. This document provides answers to the questions asked in the chat and Q&A from the August 3, 2020 Board meeting.

**Todd 11:25 PM**

**How will the tables and chairs be arranged at the Primary Center to ensure social distancing with the students?**

In all classrooms, tables/desks and chairs will be arranged facing the same direction and chairs spaced 6 feet apart.

**Nicole Hahna 09:38 PM**

**Has the board considered starting remote?**

Our District administration has been considering all options for how to return to school for the 2020-2021 school year. These considerations have been made by continually reviewing recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny County Health Department guidelines.

**From Suzanne Basista to All panelists: (9:41 PM)**

**I think it would be helpful to consider that the weather isn't going to get any better and typically flu season starts then? If anything, now seems like less of a time to go all virtual?**

Thank you for your comment. This will be considered in the decision-making process regarding the recommendation of an operational model to begin the 2020-2021 school year.

**From Suzanne Basista to All panelists: (9:46 PM)**

**It would be disappointing, in my opinion, to go to all virtual to start, if it is NOT because of rising #s. For parents who have chosen hybrid models, it feels like there is an increasing chance that later in the fall we would have to move to virtual, so it really means we are getting mostly virtual. Agreed**

Thank you for your comment.

**From Tracy Cassidy to All panelists: (9:48 PM)**

**If they get COVID then flu will be worse for them?**

Our District administrators are not medical doctors or epidemiologists and are therefore not qualified to answer this question.

**Hope Lucas 09:51 PM**

**I understand the rationale behind delaying. Would you consider a phased-in start? Meaning, start the younger grades sooner and then gradually phase in the older grades?**

Thank you for your suggestion. This was discussed and will be considered as we continue to plan. On or before August 10, Dr. Ralston will make a recommendation for starting the school year. Following this recommendation, building principals will also provide information on the start of school in their respective buildings.

**From Hannah Valeriano to All panelists: (9:56 PM)**

**Please don't take the easy way out and do virtually for the 1st month! These kids ALL AGES need to be back in the classroom! Avonworth from the beginning has said how important in-person instruction is and IT IS! These kids will adhere to the mask rules and they are resilient but its most important that they are in class!**

Thank you for your comment.