



SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

82 Monrovia Ave.

Smyrna, Delaware 19977

(302) 653-8585 Fax (302) 653-3429

Patrik D. Williams, Superintendent

August 17, 2021

Smyrna School District Staff:

Welcome back to school! I hope this letter finds you in a positive and healthy state of mind as we all prepare for our students' return to school. I am pleased to send out this "Welcome Back" letter to each of you, knowing that many of you have questions about just how our 2021/22 school year will look.

We are excited to return to full, in-person instruction five days weekly, beginning Wednesday, September 8th, and we are excited to offer "wraparound" services to those families who have chosen them. We are also implementing a full virtual option for those families who previously chose it, and we will continue to support our staff who applied for and secured positions to work in this program. Finally, we know that there will be some challenges ahead, but we are going to work through them together, reminding ourselves that our first priority is always student and staff safety. With this priority in mind, I offer a few reminders.

On August 10, 2021, the Governors' Office released an updated Health Emergency Order:

Governor John Carney on Tuesday announced that everyone kindergarten-age and older in K-12 schools and child care homes and centers must wear face coverings indoors effective on Monday, August 16 – regardless of vaccination status. The requirement covers both public and private schools in Delaware. Child care centers and homes are strongly encouraged to require masks for children 2 years old to kindergarten inside their facilities to prevent spread of COVID-19. Children younger than 2 years old should not wear masks due to risk of suffocation.

The statewide mask requirement in schools, which will be formalized later this week, is consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and will help all Delaware students safely return to classrooms full-time this fall for the 2021-2022 school year. Children younger than 12 remain ineligible for COVID-19 vaccination at this time.

Additionally, at its regularly scheduled public meeting on August 11th our Smyrna School District Board of Education approved the following guidance to protect all of our students, our families, and each of us:

1. All students in our Early Childhood Program two years of age and older are required to wear face masks while indoors during school hours.

The Smyrna School District does not discriminate in employment, educational programs, services or activities based on race, color, marital status, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or any other protected category or status in accordance with state and federal laws. Inquiries should be directed to the District Superintendent.



2. While staff are not required to wear face masks while working in group settings during professional development days, all are strongly encouraged to do so in a concerted effort to protect one another.

I also offer some additional information to assist you in your planning

- New teachers will report on August 24th and 25th. All instructional staff may also report to their buildings for the first time on Tuesday, August 24th, if they choose. ***On August 26th, all staff will report to their buildings, schools and classrooms.***
- District and school administrative teams have coordinated professional development programs so that we are all prepared to welcome our students back to school on September 8th. If you have any questions, please contact your school administrators for direction.
- Due to current public health mandates at the time of this letter, there will be no district breakfast program this year. Instead, school administrators will welcome back their respective staff members with a school-based breakfast program and help them to prepare for the upcoming school year.
- Additionally, to ensure that all efforts are focused on health, safety and wellness, we are waiting on further state guidance before deciding whether live open house events may be scheduled this year. All instructional staff are certainly encouraged to post on their school's web page a brief "welcome" video to their families in anticipation of a full, in-person return to our schools.

Finally, we all understand that this is a stressful time for you, for our families, for all of us. Our primary mission is to provide meaningful instruction in a safe and healthy environment. We are a strong team, and we are well equipped to anticipate, address and overcome the certain challenges we will face together. Always remember that we are fortunate to be returning to our schools five days a week with students present in our classrooms daily, and this will provide the incentive for all of us to make the year a successful one.

Finally, if you are eligible to receive the full dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, please consider doing so. It continues to be the best way to avoid illness, close contact quarantining and associated prolonged absences from work, using personal, vacation, sick, or unpaid leave.

Please take care of yourselves, and we look forward to seeing you all soon.

Sincerely,

Patrik Williams
Superintendent