



The School District of Jenkintown
West and Highland Avenue
Jenkintown, PA 19046-2698

Dr. Jill A. Takacs
Superintendent
(215) 885-3722

December 3, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff and Students,

Today concludes the two-week virtual mandate imposed upon all Montgomery County Public Schools by the Montgomery County Office of Public Health (OPH). The latest mandate for public schools came from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) on November 23, 2020. You may access the mandate at the following link.

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/SchoolClosureRecommendations.aspx>

Jenkintown is considered by the Montgomery County Office of Public Health as one medium-sized facility because our buildings are interconnected, many staff serve both our elementary school and our secondary school, and students migrate between both buildings throughout the day.

The metrics we have used to date focus on the **county** incident rate per 100K residents and the **county** positivity rate. If a county reaches a 10% positivity OR 100 incidents per 100K residents, then the county is considered in “substantial spread.”

The new metrics in the PDE correspondence apply to **district** data and actual cases in our schools depending upon the level of transmission in our county. As a medium sized facility, if we are in “substantial spread,” we will need to close schools for **3-7 days if we have 4-6 students or staff who test positive, or who are considered a presumptive positive by a health care professional**. Because the mandate includes ranges we can determine what is best for our district. To this end, we will air on the side of caution **and close if we have 4 student/staff cases; however, we will thoroughly clean and try to return students to school in 3 days**.

However, if we reach 7 students or staff who test positive, or who are considered a presumptive positive by a health care professional, we are required to be closed for 14 days. Individuals living within the same household are considered one case. It is our intention to keep our schools open for hybrid instruction as much as possible. This being said, it is critical that our community work with us to practice social distancing, mask wearing, and quarantining when necessary.

The School District of Jenkintown is an equal opportunity employer and provider

Last week, Mrs. Cheek, Board President, and I signed and submitted an attestation to PDE that we would remain virtual this week to comply with the OPH mandate. As of today, the most recent 7-day positivity rate for Montgomery County is 8.0% and the incident rate per 100K residents is 240.8. Based upon this data, Montgomery County is considered in “substantial spread” because of its incident rate. As a comparison, Jenkintown’s 14-day positivity rate is 9.32% and its incident rate per 100K residents is 202.61. Because of our size, these statistics can be somewhat confusing. We have roughly 4,426 residents in Jenkintown; therefore, this would equate to approximately 9 positive cases in the Borough over the past 14 days. You can access the data per municipality at the following link.

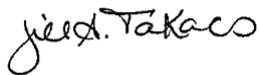
<https://data-montcopa.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/covid-19>

Mrs. Cheek and I will send another attestation this week, stating that we will return to both our hybrid and virtual modes of instruction beginning on Monday, December 7, 2020 and that we will comply with the PDE order. The only change to our hybrid model is that we are suspending our kindergarten and first grade extension program until January 4, 2021. This is so that we can “de-densify” our student population at these grade levels and maximize our staff to cover staff absences to avoid a functional closure.

As information becomes available, I will continue to update you accordingly. Our goal is to maintain both our hybrid and virtual options for families throughout our winter months as much as possible. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this difficult time.

Wishing everyone good health.

Stay safe and be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill A. Takacs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill A. Takacs, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools