



AVON GROVE CHARTER SCHOOL

INSPIRE PASSION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING ONE STUDENT AT A TIME

Important message from AGCS Administration

February 12, 2021

Dear Avon Grove Charter School Families,

This letter will update you about our continued COVID-19 response to teaching and learning at AGCS. I'm sure we can all agree that learning is complex amid a pandemic. From the start of COVID-19, Avon Grove Charter School has always prioritized health, safety, and the learning environment for our staff and students. With safety in mind, getting our students back to school for additional in-person learning has always been at the forefront of our decision making.

Our instructional staff has worked extremely hard in balancing hybrid, in-person, and online teaching formats, varying needs. We also recognize that families have absorbed the added stress of teaching their children during home-learning and seek relief. Teaching during a pandemic has reinforced the idea that all students learn differently, and some students have been successful in the current learning environment while others have not. As a school entity, we continually strive to make the best decision for our entire school community.

As we enter the second part of the school year, we have started discussing increasing the number of in-person days we can offer students. The Administration has begun discussing with the staff and AGCS Board, seeking their input and guidance in moving towards planning for a more traditional school week. An information session was held on Friday, February 12th, and the discussion and planning will continue at the Board Meeting on Tuesday, February 16th.

Before any decisions can be made about a return to school plan, we still need to follow the Chester County Health Department's recommendations and closely monitor the COVID-19 metrics. If you follow our dashboard, you have seen our COVID-19 numbers decrease tremendously from the holiday months and the Chester County rates. This steady decline gives us the potential to move from a substantial to moderate transmission range. In addition, we support our staff's need in wanting to be vaccinated. We will continue to work with the local health department to ensure that our team has the most up-to-date information on vaccination efforts. We are patiently waiting for teachers to be identified as a priority for the vaccine as they move out of the 1A group.

In addition to balancing our families' and staff's needs, the State and Local Health Departments' recommendations, we are continually staying abreast of the PA Department of Education's guidance in re-opening schools. The PDE has announced another change in protocol. They are now asking schools to work with their local health department when responding to cases of COVID-19 in a school setting. Avon Grove Charter School has always coordinated with the Chester County Health



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Department and will continue to follow recommendations for any school closures due to positive cases.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to address the feedback on our recent snow days. Multiple factors go into deciding to have fully virtual or in-person learning days during inclement weather. We always go back to our goal, maximizing our students' instructional minutes while keeping everyone safe. To clarify, a building closure does not mean a day off. It means a day of learning from home. Students have very structured classes, small group time, interventions, and assignments. That doesn't mean there are no breaks or flexibility built into those days to accommodate family needs. As we discussed previously, our Flexible Instructional Day (FID) plan was approved by PDE. However, FID's will not be implemented this school year because the PDE has declared a proclamation of disaster emergency concerning the emergence of COVID 19, thus allowing schools the flexibility to use virtual learning as instructional days. Students need as much time as possible engaged in learning with the hybrid schedule. We will use Flexible Instructional Days during a typical school year to allow for more flexibility and follow the proposed plan for timelines.

As you can see, returning students to the classroom with increased frequency is not an easy decision. There are many factors that need to be considered; however, it is imperative we start the conversation and plan to set everyone up for success when we return to school for more in-person learning. Please watch our February 12th board meeting recording ([Special February 12th Board Meeting](#)) and [submit questions and comments here](#) regarding the COVID Instructional Model Phase.

Forward Together,

Kristen Bishop
Head of School