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November 20, 2020

Dear Freedom Community,

At last night's meeting of the Board of School Directors, the decision was made by unanimous vote of the Board to return our schools to fully virtual instruction for all students. For the last several weeks our students, staff, and community have worked hard to get and keep our students in school. The numbers in our schools have been staying fairly low in terms of confirmed positive cases. However, with the significant increase in cases across the county over the last two weeks we have also started to see increased activity. We have quite a few students from the elementary school who have been sent home to quarantine due to symptoms. However, at the middle and high schools we are experiencing some issues with staffing and classroom coverage. We also have had some difficulty with members of our school community attending gatherings outside of school and being exposed to COVID. We can control the factors for success during school hours, but not once our students and staff leave our grounds.

Our Phased Reopening plan provides the parameters through which we make decisions about whether or not to maintain in-person instruction. These parameters include county-wide numbers for incidence rate and positivity rate as well as guidance from the Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Centers for Disease Control. We also look at numbers within the buildings, including staffing availability.

On Monday of this week, the Beaver County superintendents participated in a meeting with leadership from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. During this meeting, we learned that 84% of the skyrocketing number of cases in the county are coming from community spread, meaning that they are unable to pinpoint a particular event or exposure that led to the positive test result. We also learned that 10% of the cases are being found in school-age children.

Beaver County moved into Substantial Spread when the numbers were released last Friday. When the county-wide numbers were released today, the numbers again increased. This led to a recommendation from the Department of Education that we move to fully virtual instruction for all students.

Based on the numbers involved in many of these parameters and in an effort to help stem the spread of the virus in the school community, the Board accepted my recommendation that we follow our Phased Re-Entry plan and move all students to virtual instruction beginning on Monday.

Virtual instruction will look just as it did before we returned to school. Teachers will be live on-line for their schedule. There will also be recorded sessions for asynchronous instruction. To assist families with students in multiple buildings, we will also return to the virtual schedule that we followed early in the school year. We are working with special education families on a

case-by-case basis to determine the best way to meet their needs. Your building principals and classroom teachers will be sharing specific information with you and their students.

To assist our families, free meals will be provided at the same locations that were used at the beginning of the school year - in front of the middle school, at the Conway Municipal Building (former Conway Elementary), Big Knob Elementary School, and Unionville Methodist Church. Specific information on meal delivery is available on the District website.

Moving forward, our return to in-person will be based on the parameters presented in the District's Phased Re-Entry Plan. However, once we meet the required numbers, all students will return at the same time instead of the stepped re-entry that we followed in the fall.

We understand that this decision is a hardship for our community. We all have to work together to return our students to their classrooms as soon as possible. Please join us in doing everything we can to follow the universal masking order, avoid large groups, and look out for each other.

Be well, Freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Fuller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "F".

Jeffrey A. Fuller, Ed.D.
Superintendent