

## **DCTS 2020-2021 School Year Update August 14, 2020**

For the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, DCTS is changing to a remote learning (virtual) instructional model through October 2 and then a transition to an in-person instructional model beginning on October 5.

### **DCTS Opening Plan**

#### **1. September 8 through October 2:**

- a. **Full Remote Learning (Virtual) Model:** Decision based on review of current county health data, guidance from health experts, and coordination with majority of sending schools
- b. Instructional programming: OSHA, Career Guidance/Portfolio, Technical Remote Learning Modules, Theory/Knowledge related to skills to be demonstrated later through in-person learning model
- c. **School Districts Need to:**
  - i. Maintain AM and PM student schedules (as assigned by DCTS) to allow transportation to take place at beginning of October
  - ii. Must plan for daily transportation to DCTS campuses and medical careers programs to resume at beginning of October
  - iii. Hours/times for the AM/PM and medical careers sessions will be the same as the 2019-2020 school year

#### **2. October 5 Begin:**

- a. **In-Person Learning Model:** In-person technical instruction for students
  - b. DCTS will still have distance learning resources/programming for any student who cannot attend due to health or other issues.
3. Both of these models will have instruction taking place during the AM or PM rotation that students are scheduled. Synchronous and asynchronous instructional activities will take place.



Empowering Partnerships For Education

Maria Edelberg, Ed.D., Executive Director

Delaware County Intermediate Unit  
Education Service Center  
200 Yale Avenue  
Morton, PA 19070  
Phone: 610-938-9000 | Fax: 610-938-9887  
www.dciu.org

August 14, 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians:

First and foremost, the Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU) and I hope you and your families are happy, well, and safe. As we continue to plan for the reopening of our programs and services, it is important to provide an update to our previous letter. As one watches or reads the news, the incidents of COVID-19 cases are on the rise in some areas. We have been meeting with the Chester County Health Department and medical experts from the University of Pennsylvania and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to keep abreast of the data specifically for our county and for ongoing guidance. This is important as it is assisting the DCIU and the Delaware County Technical Schools (DCTS) to make informed decisions as the school and program year quickly approaches.

Predicting the course of the pandemic is difficult, primarily because it relies on personal responsibility to follow masking and social distancing guidelines, and to obey travel restrictions.

**With new information, and out of an abundance of caution, the Delaware County Technical High Schools will begin the school year on September 8, 2020 with virtual services and instruction rather than in-person instruction and services. These virtual services will be delivered through October 2, 2020, with in-person services scheduled to resume on October 5, 2020 unless circumstances at that time warrant that this plan be revisited.** This was an extremely difficult decision to make, and we appreciate your understanding of the complexity of the many factors which needed to be thoroughly considered in making it.

I think it might be helpful to provide some background information. Recent data in Delaware County shows some promising information of trends:

- Case counts are fluctuating in Delaware County. There are several data sets the Chester County Health Department uses to look at trends in our county – *Newly Reported Cases, Incidence Rate, Positivity, and Contact Tracing*.
  - *Newly Reported Cases*. For the week ending on August 6, there were 445 new cases reported in Delaware County, which was down from the previous week's count of 513 new cases. [Case counts are the number of people who tested positive for COVID-19.]
  - *Incidence Rate*. The incidence rate on August 6 was 78.8. The Incidence Rate is number of individuals per 100,000 residents in our county that have tested positive for COVID-19.
  - *Positivity*. As of August 6, 2020, the 7-day positivity rate, which is the number of people testing positive compared to the total number of people tested, was 5.2 %.
  - *Contact Tracing*. On August 6, 167 individuals were in the process of working with the Chester County Department of Health on contract tracing. Through contract tracing, a theme that has emerged is travel has demonstrated an increase to cases in Delaware County.

Further, on August 10, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DoH) and Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) issued the *Determining Instructional Models During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Recommendations for Pre-K to 12 Schools*. These metrics look at two of the criteria above (Incidence Rate and Positivity). After the review of these two data sets, the Departments issue a recommendation. The recommendations fall into three categories: Full In-Person Model of School Opening, Blended (Hybrid)

Learning or Full Remote Model, or Full Remote Learning Model. As of August 10, Delaware County's recommendation was for *Blended (Hybrid) Learning or Full Remote Model*.

DCIU is working diligently in implementing our Health and Safety Plan to assist in our mitigation efforts in all of our programs to support the reopening. Any delay in the reopening of any classroom-based programs was an extremely difficult decision to make with many complex factors considered. DCIU appreciates your understanding in the making of this decision.

Please remember it is critical that we all wear masks when we leave our homes, keep physically distant between individuals of at least six feet, and increase the hygiene practice of hand washing. It has been shown that these strategies do have an impact on driving down the positivity rate of COVID-19 in our communities.

Sincerely,



Stephen D. Butz, Ed.D.

Director of Career and Technical Education