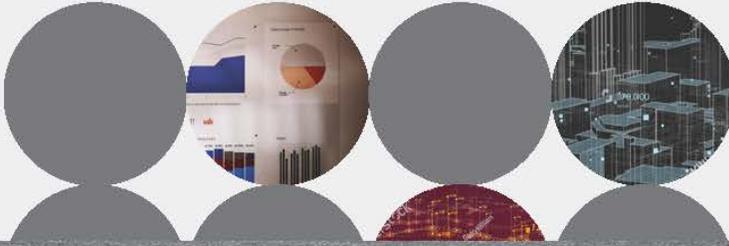
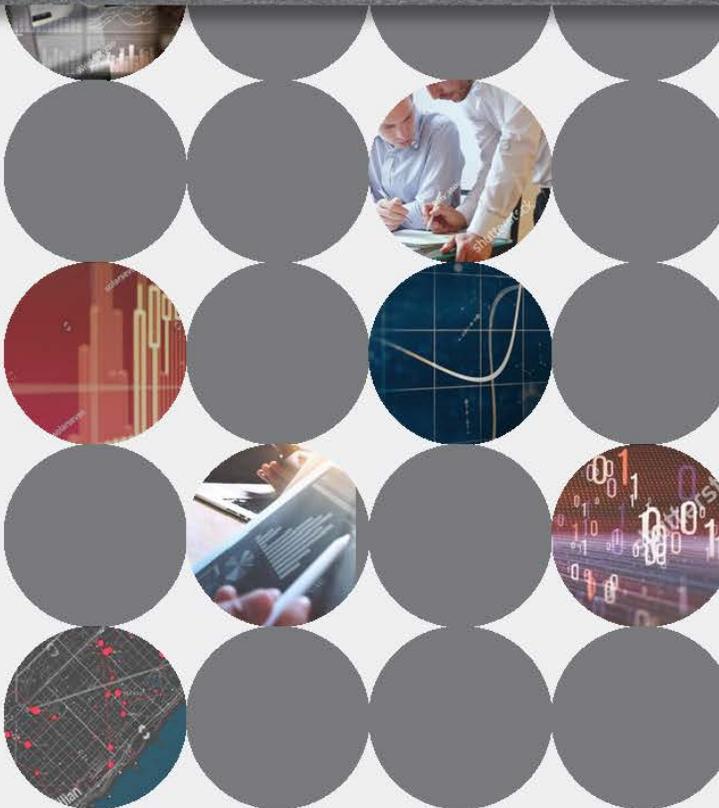


A Partnership Among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton & Wilkes University



THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



September 2020

# ***Institute Insights:*** **Impact of COVID-19** **on K-12 Education in** **Our Region** **Part 2: Fall 2020**



## Introduction

This research was underwritten by the **Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Sordoni Family Foundation, and UGI Utilities** and with support from the **Luzerne County COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund of The Luzerne Foundation, the Scranton Area Community Foundation COVID 19 Fund and the Wells Fargo Foundation.**

This report is the second part in a series of reports by the Institute to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public school education in our region for Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The first part of this analysis examined the approaches used by school districts in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties to provide Continuity of Education to students in the spring of 2020 following the mandated closure of all Pennsylvania schools beginning in mid-March to mitigate the spread of the virus. The second part of this analysis examines the approaches adopted by schools as they reopen in the fall for the 2020-2021 academic year.

## Guidelines for Reopening

The Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Education issued recommendations on which instructional models school administrators should consider when reopening based on the levels of community transmission of COVID-19. The recommendations take into consideration the following two risk factors:

- **Percent positivity of diagnostic testing:** The percentage of COVID-19 tests that come back positive in their counties over the most recent seven-day period.
- **Incidence rate:** The number of positive tests per 100,000 county residents over that same period.<sup>1</sup>

These risk factors are tracked at the county level on the PA Department of Health’s COVID-19 Early Warning Monitoring System Dashboard.<sup>2</sup>

The recommendations established the following low, moderate and substantial thresholds to help school districts determine which model they should use

based on these risk factors. However, other local factors such as the size of the school and available classroom space, number of staff and students with health risk factors and special needs, and the ability to provide the resources students need for remote learning, should also be taken into consideration when determining which model school districts should follow.

Level of Community Transmission in the County	Incidence Rate per 100,000 Residents (Most Recent 7 Days)	AND/OR	PCR Percent Positivity (Most Recent 7 Days)	Recommended Instructional Models
Low	<10	AND	<5%	Full in-person Model OR Blended Learning Model
Moderate	10 to <100	OR	5% to <10%	Blended Learning Model OR Full Remote Learning Model
Substantial	≥100	OR	≥10%	Full Remote Learning Model

Source: PA Department of Education

On a weekly basis, the PDE publishes a Level of Community Transmission Table identifying the thresholds for all counties in the state based on these criteria. As of the period ending September 4, both Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties were in the Moderate threshold, and have remained at this level for the previous five weeks. While both counties have a PCR percent positivity rate of less than five percent for the most recent 7-day period, the incidence rate for both counties is above ten per 100,000 residents. At this level, it is recommended that school districts follow a blended or full remote learning model.

County	Incidence Rate per 100,000 Residents		PCR Percent Positivity	
	Recent Period 9/4 – 9/10	Previous Period 8/28 – 9/3	Recent Period 9/4 – 9/10	Previous Period 8/28 – 9/3
Lackawanna County	43.6	65.5	4.3%	4.1%
Luzerne County	29.0	24.9	4.2%	3.2%

Source: PA Department of Health COVID-19 Early Warning Monitoring System Dashboard

<sup>1</sup> (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> (Pennsylvania Department of Health, 2020)

The Departments of Health and Education recommend that school districts monitor these thresholds and the level of community transmission to determine when to transition between instructional models. Although a county’s threshold may change week to week, the DOH and PDE recommend that schools consider changing instructional models only after observing two consecutive weeks of the same designation.

### Reopening Plans

Prior to reopening, all school districts in Pennsylvania are required to create a Health and Safety plan that will serve as the local guidelines for school reopening activities. The plan must be approved by the school board of directors or other governing body, and submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). School districts were advised to create their plans in consultation with local health agencies, and tailor their plans to the unique needs of their district.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the Health and Safety plans, many school districts also documented their return to school plans, which outlined the approaches they planned to use for instructing students, and other considerations for ensuring the health and safety of students and staff.

As part of their Health and Safety plans, school districts identified what type of school reopening approach they were adopting based on their county’s red/yellow/green designation under Governor Wolf’s Process to Reopen Pennsylvania plan, and their local community needs. Many districts conducted surveys among their district populations during the summer to assess their preferences for in-person versus remote learning, access to electronic devices and the Internet, transportation needs, and other concerns, and took this information into account when designing their reopening plans.

DESCRIPTION OF REOPENING APPROACHES IN PDE HEALTH AND SAFETY PLANS	
Total Reopen	Total reopen for traditional, in-person instruction for students, however students/families can opt for distance learning out of safety/health concerns.
Scaffolded Reopening	Some students are engaged in in-person learning, while others are distance learning (i.e., some grade levels in-person, other grade levels remote learning).
Blended Reopening	Balances in-person learning and remote learning for all students (i.e., alternating days or weeks).
Total Remote	Total remote learning for all students. Plans should reflect future action steps to be implemented and conditions that would prompt the decision as to when schools will re-open for in-person learning.

Based on a review of school district’s health and safety plans and published reports, school districts in the region are using the following approaches when reopening for the 2020-2021 academic year.<sup>4</sup>

**MATRIX OF REOPENING APPROACHES**  
LUZERNE AND LACKAWANNA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS – FALL 2020

	TOTAL REMOTE	BLENDED REOPENING	TOTAL REOPENING
LACKAWANNA COUNTY	ABINGTON HEIGHTS CARBONDALE LAKELAND SCRANTON VALLEY VIEW	DUNMORE MID VALLEY NORTH POCONO OLD FORGE RIVERSIDE	LACKAWANNA TRAIL
LUZERNE COUNTY	CRESTWOOD HAZLETON PITTSTON WYOMING AREA WYOMING VALLEY WEST	DALLAS HANOVER NANTICOKE NORTHWEST	LAKE LEHMAN WILKES-BARRE

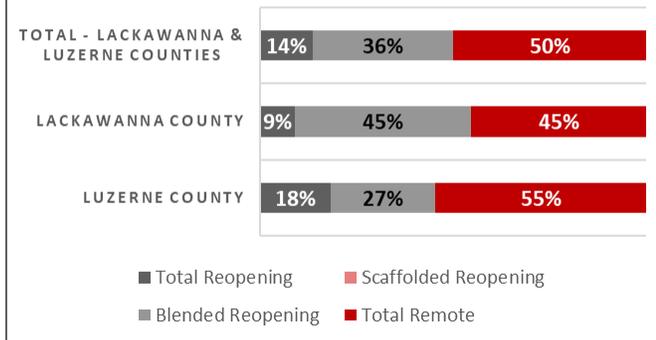
Half of the school districts in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties have started or plan to start the 2020-2021 academic year using a Total Remote approach, with all students participating in virtual or remote learning. This is slightly higher in Luzerne County, with 55 percent of school districts starting in a totally remote format, compared to 45 percent of districts in Lackawanna County.

<sup>3</sup> (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2020)

<sup>4</sup>Luzerne County School Districts include: Crestwood, Dallas, Greater Nanticoke Area, Hanover Area, Hazleton Area, Lake Lehman, Northwest Area, Pittston Area, Wilkes-Barre Area, Wyoming Area and Wyoming Valley West. Lackawanna County

School Districts include: Abington Heights, Carbondale Area, Dunmore, Lackawanna Trail, Lakeland, Mid Valley, North Pocono, Old Forge, Riverside, Scranton and Valley View. Although Lackawanna Trail is within Wyoming County, it was included in Lackawanna County’s totals for the purposes of this analysis.

## REOPENING PLANS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN FALL 2020



Fourteen percent of the districts in the two counties combined have opted for a total reopening, including two school districts in Luzerne County (Lake Lehman and Wilkes-Barre Area) and one in Lackawanna County (Lackawanna Trail). Although these schools are planning to offer traditional in-person instruction to their students, they have also given students and their families the option to attend virtually instead, with synchronous classes live-streamed to those attending remotely. The two districts in Luzerne County also offered a virtual option through their district cyber program that includes asynchronous classes so students have the flexibility to complete assignments at a time that is convenient for them. Although these three school districts have opted for a total reopening, they also have Chromebooks or electronic devices available for all or the majority of their students to support those who choose a virtual option.

Over one-third of the school districts in the two counties combined have opted for a blended, or hybrid, reopening. In this case, instruction will be balanced between in-person and remote learning. Most districts pursuing this option plan to split students into two groups which will rotate between receiving in-person instruction two days per week, and remote instruction the remaining three days per week. School districts pursuing a blended reopening have also given parents and students the option for full remote learning instead, either through a virtual or cyber platform. Ninety-one percent of districts in Luzerne County have a cyber program available, and 36 percent of districts in Lackawanna County offer a

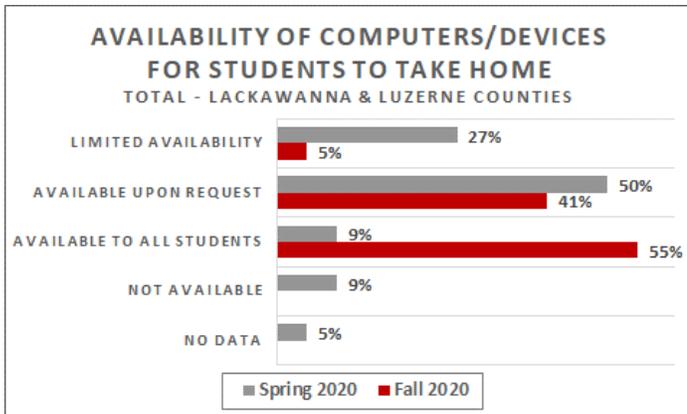
district cyber platform, according to schools' reopening plans. Recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach may not work for everyone, parents can decide what approach works best depending on their child's needs, their availability to provide assistance based on their work requirements and schedule, and their comfort with the safety plans outlined for in-school settings.

Since this is a dynamic situation, many districts have shifted their plans as the reopening of the school year approached. For example, Crestwood, Hanover Area, Pittston Area, Wyoming Area, and Wyoming Valley West switched to remote only instruction after initially considering in-person or hybrid plans. This analysis is based on the Health and Safety Plans and return to school plans that were in place at the time this report was published.

### Availability of Devices for Students

As school districts begin reopening, and all are including some remote learning component in their plans, they recognize the necessity of providing students with access to electronic devices. More school districts in our region have attempted to make Chromebooks or other electronic devices available to students compared to spring 2020. All districts in the two counties plan to have at least limited availability of devices. Many districts used federal stimulus funds to purchase devices for students. Over half plan to have devices available to all students, compared to nine percent in the spring. Another 41 percent plan to have devices available upon request, while one district, Carbondale Area, has limited availability and is issuing one device per household. According to the school district's website, they will revisit their inventory after distributions are complete and attempt to offer a second device to homes with multiple students if inventory allows.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> (Carbondale Area School District, 2020)



As school districts have improved access to devices, many have not indicated if they plan to provide take home packets of learning materials for students who do not have access to electronic devices. In the spring, 73 percent of school districts in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties had packets of learning materials available for students, according to districts' Continuity of Education plans. In the fall, only nine percent of districts (2 schools in total – Hazleton and Wyoming Valley West) documented plans to provide take home packets to students in need.

### Technology Challenges

While districts have outlined their plans to make electronic devices available to students, many are facing challenges obtaining devices due to the high demand and a shortage of supplies. According to an Associated Press investigation, the three largest computer companies worldwide, Lenovo, HP and Dell, reported a shortage of nearly 5 million laptops.<sup>6</sup> There are concerns that the device shortages will further increase inequities in underserved populations, and create challenges for teachers who will need to adapt their approaches to accommodate students with and without access to devices.

Locally, Scranton School District, which is planning for totally remote learning for the first quarter, ordered 10,000 Chromebooks, enough to supply their entire student population, but as of August 25, had only received 1,700.<sup>7</sup> While awaiting for the remaining devices to arrive in mid-October, one device will be issued per family. Hanover Area School

District faces a similar situation. The district is planning to follow a remote learning approach until at least Oct. 1, and is awaiting a shipment of Chromebooks for students. According to a report, the district has only a few hundred computers available for their approximately 2,100 students, and will provide the devices based on who needs them most.<sup>8</sup>

Even if students have access to a device, they may not have internet access needed to access online learning resources. According to 2018 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 84.1 percent of households in Lackawanna County and 82.1 percent in Luzerne County have internet subscriptions, compared to 84.5 percent statewide. However, for households with annual incomes of under \$20,000, about 60 percent have Internet access statewide and regionally. Similar to the spring, some school districts are providing assistance with Internet access, either by supplying personal Wi-Fi hot spot connections through the district and offering Wi-Fi connectivity in school parking lots. Some school districts also provided resources for accessing free or low-cost Internet service from local service providers.

In addition to a shortage of supplies, districts are also coping with an increased need for requests for technology support from students, parents, and teachers, as they try to become acclimated with the technology and platforms being used for remote instruction. Districts often have small staffs in their technology department, who will be tasked with managing the distribution and maintenance of devices and providing technological support to students and teachers. Teachers may need additional training and support in online instruction techniques and technology training. Some school districts have outlined Professional Development initiatives for teachers in their reopening plans. Mid-Valley plans to offer a professional learning platform, Google certified educator training, and faculty-led professional development and dedicated online support.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> (Gecker & Liedtke, 2020)

<sup>7</sup> (Hall & Bolus, Scranton, Other NEPA Students Could be Without Laptops As Virtual Learning Begins, 2020)

<sup>8</sup> (Kalinowski, 2020)

<sup>9</sup> (Mid Valley School District, 2020)

Districts may also encounter issues as they attempt to live-stream classes in synchronous learning environments. Valley View School District has reportedly encountered issues with students and teachers logging into and getting kicked out of live classes.<sup>10</sup> Security issues are also a concern, with an increase in Zoom meeting hacks for users of the platform, including a kindergarten orientation session attended by parents and students in the Hazleton Area school district that was recently hacked. School districts are taking precautions to ensure the proper security procedures are in place to prevent these threats as they adjust to remote learning environments.

### Instruction Methods

In the spring, nearly all school districts in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties (95 percent) used asynchronous remote instruction methods to deliver educational materials to students, providing self-guided content and resources that gave students the flexibility to complete assignments at their own pace. Less than half of school districts in the two counties (41 percent) offered synchronous classes, or lessons delivered in real-time through virtual meeting technologies.

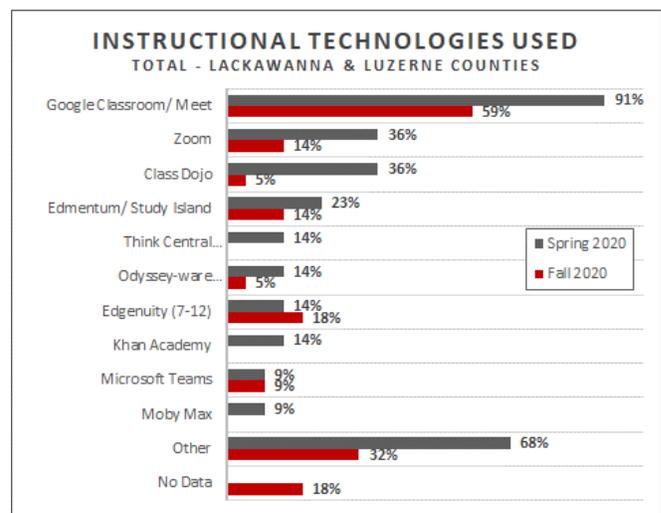
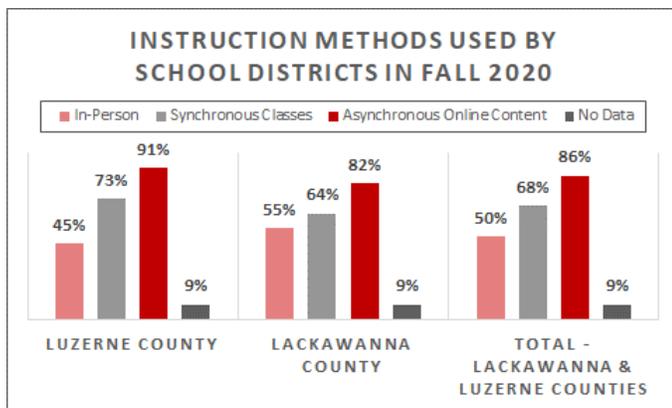
While asynchronous methods will remain the predominant approach used as school districts in the region reopen in the fall, with 86 percent of districts in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties combined utilizing this method, there has been an increase in districts planning to provide synchronous instruction. In their reopening plans, 68 percent of

districts indicated they planned to offer synchronous lessons that are live streamed to students. In Luzerne County, 73 percent of districts (8 out of 11 districts in the county) plan to offer synchronous lessons at least part of the time. This is an increase from 27 percent (3 districts) of Luzerne County districts that used this approach in the spring.

When schools reopen, half of districts across the two counties will be offering in-person instruction at least part of the time. Another 36 percent have outlined plans to offer in-person instruction at a later date after beginning the school year in a remote only format.

### Instructional Technologies

In nearly 20 percent of school districts in the region, details on the instructional technologies they plan to use for remote instruction when reopening were not available. Among those school districts where this information was documented either in school districts' plans or on their websites, Google Classroom/Meet continues to be the most common platform, with nearly 60 percent of districts documenting plans to use it. Fewer districts noted plans to use Zoom in the fall (14 percent) compared to the spring (36 percent), while two districts (nine percent) plan to use Microsoft Teams. Limited use of other instructional technologies were noted by school districts.



<sup>10</sup> (Eustice, 2020)

## Participation, Attendance and Grading Policies

For over one-third of school districts in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, details on their participation and attendance policies were not available in their reopening plans. Attendance policies may be documented in student handbooks, and therefore not addressed in school reopening plans. For the remaining nearly two-thirds of districts, reopening plans indicate that student participation is mandated and attendance will be recorded. In both cases, this is an increase from the spring. In some districts such as Dallas and Wyoming Area, which are offering synchronous classes to remote learners, attendance will be recorded daily and by class period. At Wyoming Area, students must be marked present for all of their classes in order to be marked present for the day.<sup>11</sup> In other school districts using asynchronous instruction for remote learners, attendance will be recorded based on work submitted by the student.

Some states are trying to establish requirements for instruction by requiring schools to take attendance for remote learners and establish minimums on instructional time. For example, legislators in California are requiring minimum daily instructional minutes based on grade level, ranging from 180 minutes per day for kindergarten students to 240 minutes per day for grades 4 through 12.<sup>12</sup>

Nearly 60 percent of school districts in the two-county region indicated that assignments would be graded, in some cases noting that existing grading policies would be in effect as outlined in student

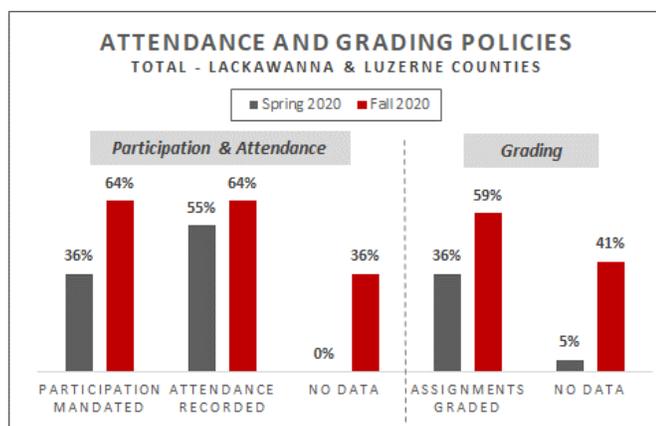
handbooks. Most school districts' modified grading policies that were followed in the spring have been discontinued. Some districts detailed differentiated grading policies in certain circumstances. For example, Wyoming Valley West noted plans to issue grades for students in grades 4-12, while not issuing grades for students in grades K-3 for the first marking period. Progress reports will be provided for these students instead.<sup>13</sup> About 40 percent of districts did not comment on their grading policies in reopening plans.

## Resources for Students with Special Needs

School districts' reopening plans for the fall contain limited information on support for students with special needs and vulnerable populations. Mid-Valley school district plans to provide increased in-person instruction for special needs students. Old Forge school district, which plans to reopen under a hybrid plan with 2 days per week of in-person instruction, is offering students with special needs, English Learners, and Learning Support students the option to attend in-person more frequently if needed, as space permits.

Intermediate Units in our region, Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 (LIU 18) and the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit 19 (NEIU19), convened a task force to assist local education agencies with fall reopening plans. The task force created a repository of information for school leaders to consider in their reopening plans, including information from the PA Departments of Education and Health.<sup>14</sup>

According to their Health and Safety Plan, LIU 18 is planning for a scaffolded reopening for the students it serves. Parents and guardians will have the choice of sending their children to school for in-person instruction, receiving virtual instruction, or a hybrid combination, depending on the options available in their host school district. The right approach for each student will be determined with input from parents and the IEP team.



<sup>11</sup> (Wyoming Area School District, 2020)

<sup>12</sup> (Blume, 2020)

<sup>13</sup> (Wyoming Valley West School District, 2020)

<sup>14</sup> (NEPA School Reopening Task Force, 2020)

## Other Resources for Students and Families

In the spring, all school districts in the region provided meal distributions for all students, regardless of free-lunch status, due to waivers from the federal government to allow schools to provide free meals to all children. Many children facing food insecurity rely on school breakfast and lunch programs for their meals. According to estimates by Feeding America, 27.7 percent of children in Luzerne County and 25.9 percent in Lackawanna County will face food insecurity in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, an increase of around 50 percent in both counties from 2018 levels.<sup>15</sup>

As of the time this report was prepared, just over one-quarter of school districts have noted plans for meal distributions to students, including remote learners. A decision issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on Aug. 31 will extend the waivers granted previously through the end of 2020, and allow schools to continue providing free meals to students, as long as funding remains available. This will allow meals to be served in all areas and at no cost, outside of the typically-required group settings and meal times. Meal pattern requirements will be waived as necessary, and parents and guardians will be allowed to pick-up meals for their children.<sup>16</sup> The announcement of this extension is expected to spur more districts to announce plans for meal distributions to students.

Some districts outlined plans to provide resources to students to support their emotional and mental health as they transition back to school under different circumstances. Lake Lehman school district has developed a plan for students struggling with coping skills related to returning to school and dealing with COVID-19 experiences.<sup>17</sup> Wyoming Valley West school district also plans to offer mental health support services.

## Health and Safety Considerations

As part of their Health and Safety plans, all school districts identified their pandemic coordinator and team and their associated roles and responsibilities for health and safety preparedness and response

planning. Schools were required to document plans for cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting and ventilation of learning spaces and other areas used by students. They were also required to outline social distancing plans, including strategies for classrooms, buses, hallways, restrooms, cafeterias, and other areas.

Although there is some consistency in the health and safety plans approved by school districts, there are also variances. Some school districts are providing teachers, staff, and students with face coverings, mask, or shields, while others are not, although they are requiring that face coverings be worn in accordance with state mandates.

In their Health and Safety plans, school districts documented their processes for monitoring student and staff health, and procedures for isolating or quarantining individuals when necessary. Some districts will be conducting temperature screening on all students, staff and visitors prior to entering school buildings, while others will be relying upon parents and guardians to perform at-home screening. In some cases, school districts such as Hanover Area are asking parents and guardians to sign an agreement to monitor their children for COVID-19 symptoms, conduct daily temperature checks, and keep children home if they are showing symptoms or were exposed to someone with the virus in the past 14 days.<sup>18</sup> School districts have outlined protocols for when a student or staff member displays symptoms, and plans for returning to school or work following symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test. In some school districts, including Wilkes-Barre Area, students who are absent due to exhibiting one or more documented symptoms of COVID-19 must present a Medical Practitioner's clearance note for readmission to the school.<sup>19</sup>

As part of their plans, school districts outlined their approach for ensuring ongoing health and safety plan communications with students and parents, and detailed their approaches for training faculty and staff on the Health and Safety plan components. Currently, there is not a coordinated statewide effort to track and publish the number of COVID-19 cases by school district. Although cases in nursing homes

<sup>15</sup> (Feeding America, 2020)

<sup>16</sup> (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2020)

<sup>17</sup> (Lake Lehman School District, 2020)

<sup>18</sup> (Hanover Area School District, 2020)

<sup>19</sup> (Wilkes-Barre Area School District, 2020)

and prisons are being tracked and reported by state agencies, the Department of Health is not publishing similar data for schools. It will be up to individual school districts to determine whether to release information about confirmed cases identified within their districts. Schools may have concerns with publicizing confirmed cases due to privacy issues, however, transparency can keep parents and the community informed about health and safety concerns.

The National Education Association launched a database to track cases in public K-12 schools by

## Funding

As schools prepare to reopen, they face increased costs associated with addressing health and safety issues and transitioning to remote learning. Federal funding to support students includes \$13.2 billion for the **Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief (ESSER) Fund** through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided to states to support K-12 school districts. The funding could be used for cleaning and sanitizing schools, purchasing technology tools needed for education such as laptops and hotspot devices, training educators on using online learning tools, ensuring access to education for students with disabilities, and providing emergency funding for food and basic essential needs for students.

Pennsylvania was awarded \$523.8 million in funds, including over \$19 million for public schools districts in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. Federal CARES Act funding also included \$3 billion for the **Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund**, including \$104 million awarded to Pennsylvania, which can be used for significantly impacted school districts or higher education institutions. From this funding, Governor Tom Wolf awarded \$17 million to school districts to improve educational services for **historically underserved students** at schools designated for Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), including nearly \$1.8 million for public school districts and intermediate units in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties.

state based on published reports and self-reported submissions by educators and the public.<sup>20</sup>

According to the NEA site, published information on case activity is verified through media accounts, district websites or press releases, or other public sources. Although it is not a comprehensive tracker of all COVID-19 cases in schools, it is an informal way to share information about case activity. According to the tracker, as of September 9, there were 84 cases among staff and students of school districts in Pennsylvania, including two in our region.

Using \$15 million in GEER funds and \$5 million from the PA Department of Education's federal funding through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Governor Wolf also awarded approximately \$20 million to help schools provide **Compensatory Services to Students with Special Needs** who may face additional challenges due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts. This includes over \$800,000 for public school districts in the two counties.

Pennsylvania also awarded over \$19 million in two rounds of **Continuity of Education and Equity Grants** to provide financial support to school with the highest percentages of students unable to participate in continuity of education, including over \$1.2 million to public school districts and intermediate units in the two counties.

The following table summarizes the funding allocations made available through the CARES Act for K-12 public education entities and intermediate units in the two counties. These entities may have received additional funding or grants to address educational and safety needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, so this may not be a full accounting of all funds that may have been received or awarded.

Based on the funding allocations that were analyzed, public school districts and intermediate units in both counties combined have been awarded over \$23 million in funding, with 62 percent of that total going to entities in Luzerne County. Scranton School District has been the largest recipient of funding in

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<sup>20</sup> (National Education Association, 2020)

Lackawanna County, accounting for 58 percent of the total. In Luzerne County, Hazleton Area, Wilkes-Barre Area, and Wyoming Valley West school

districts have received the largest shares of funding, accounting for a combined 70 percent of the total.

<b>Regional CARES Act Funding Allocations for Education for K-12 Public Education Entities and Intermediate Units</b>					
<b>Local Education Agency or Intermediate Unit</b>	<b>Share of 2019-2020 ESSER Fund</b>	<b>GEER Fund - Services for Historically Underserved Students</b>	<b>GEER Fund - Compensatory Services for Students with Special Needs</b>	<b>Continuity of Education and Equity Grants</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>
Abington Heights SD	\$226,310	\$0	\$15,238	\$0	\$241,548
Carbondale Area SD	\$629,788	\$0	\$24,425	\$24,800	\$679,013
Dunmore SD	\$376,548	\$34,646	\$19,285	\$0	\$430,479
Lackawanna Trail SD	\$184,582	\$0	\$11,756	\$0	\$196,338
Lakeland SD	\$196,233	\$40,849	\$13,502	\$0	\$250,584
Mid Valley SD	\$486,487	\$60,816	\$17,393	\$0	\$564,696
North Pocono SD	\$324,519	\$0	\$23,057	\$0	\$347,576
Old Forge SD	\$186,968	\$0	\$5,671	\$15,500	\$208,139
Riverside SD	\$323,316	\$0	\$22,985	\$63,450	\$409,751
Scranton SD	\$3,981,491	\$436,128	\$170,245	\$506,699	\$5,094,563
Valley View SD	\$330,122	\$0	\$23,167	\$0	\$353,289
Northeastern Educational IU 19	\$0	\$74,166	\$0	\$9,050	\$83,216
<b>Total Lackawanna County</b>	<b>\$7,246,364</b>	<b>\$646,605</b>	<b>\$346,723</b>	<b>\$619,499</b>	<b>\$8,859,192</b>
Crestwood SD	\$221,784	\$0	\$16,355	\$0	\$238,139
Dallas SD	\$305,097	\$52,548	\$15,766	\$0	\$373,411
Greater Nanticoke Area SD	\$842,045	\$68,038	\$14,532	\$74,550	\$999,165
Hanover Area SD	\$552,450	\$68,246	\$26,142	\$19,400	\$666,238
Hazleton Area SD	\$3,674,333	\$273,058	\$84,323	\$359,000	\$4,390,714
Lake-Lehman SD	\$221,856	\$0	\$20,783	\$0	\$242,639
Northwest Area SD	\$211,963	\$0	\$14,832	\$16,500	\$243,295
Pittston Area SD	\$721,200	\$69,397	\$48,164	\$21,950	\$860,711
Wilkes-Barre Area SD	\$3,292,685	\$335,653	\$130,301	\$67,000	\$3,825,639
Wyoming Area SD	\$469,263	\$56,621	\$39,311	\$10,000	\$575,195
Wyoming Valley West SD	\$1,512,701	\$99,832	\$67,329	\$14,000	\$1,693,862
Luzerne IU 18	\$0	\$125,937	\$0	\$15,650	\$141,587
<b>Total Luzerne County</b>	<b>\$12,025,377</b>	<b>\$1,149,330</b>	<b>\$477,838</b>	<b>\$598,050</b>	<b>\$14,250,595</b>

*Note: Although Lackawanna Trail is within Wyoming County, it was included in Lackawanna County's totals for the purposes of this analysis.*  
*Sources: Pennsylvania Department of Education Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund LEA Allocations, Pennsylvania Department of Education Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funds.*

School districts are facing increased financial challenges in responding to the crisis. Some districts that were struggling financially prior to the pandemic have had to make staffing cuts as a result. Scranton School District recently furloughed 218 employees, including 140 paraprofessionals who work directly with students to provide one-on-one

assistance.<sup>21</sup> Although students have transitioned to remote learning at least temporarily, there is still a need to provide support services to students. Addressing funding gaps to be able to continue providing needed services and support to students will be critical.

<sup>21</sup> (Hall, Scranton School Board Approves 218 Furloughs, 2020)

## Summary & Recommendations

Schools continue to face numerous challenges in determining the best approaches to safely and equitably provide instruction to students given the current circumstances. There has been much discussion and debate about whether to reopen schools, and what approaches should be used to best ensure the health and safety of students and staff. It is clear based on the variety of approaches outlined in reopening plans by school districts in our region that a one-size-fits-all approach is not feasible.

Even within individual families, varying approaches may be needed to best meet the needs of individual students. Some parents may face challenges supporting their children's educational needs due to their work requirements or limited access to required resources. To help mitigate this, many school districts have tried to provide parents with options for virtual, in-person or hybrid learning, and are expanding efforts to provide access to resources for remote learning. As schools begin to reopen and some offer in-person instruction, outbreaks of COVID-19 may require schools to intermittently close and adjust their approaches to rely more on remote learning.

School board members and administrators are being relied upon to make public health decisions and determine reopening approaches for their districts. They face a myriad of considerations related to instruction methods, logistics, health and safety, staffing and personnel, transportation, special education, and other factors. While facing challenges with how to ensure students' learning and educational attainment, they are also tasked with how to address other safety net concerns, including children's physical and mental health, social and emotional development, and food security. Providing school administrators with access to public health experts for consultation and guidance, and support from state and federal administrators, will be critical to ensure they make informed decisions.

School districts in our region have made improvements in providing students with access to electronic devices needed for remote instruction. Over half plan to have devices available to all students, compared to nine percent in the spring.

Most of the remaining districts plan to have devices available upon request. However, many districts have faced challenges obtaining devices prior to the start of the school year due to the high demand and a shortage of supplies.

There has also been an increase in the number of districts planning to provide synchronous, or live-streamed, instruction to remote learners. Across both counties, 68 percent of districts plan to offer synchronous instruction compared to 41 percent in the spring. Educators, students and teachers are expected to face a variety of challenges as they become acclimated with the technology and platforms being used for remote instruction, leading to an increased need for technology support from district support staff.

In over one-third of school districts in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, details on their participation and attendance policies were not available in their reopening plans, and in a similar percentage of districts, grading policies were not addressed. Although these policies may be documented in student handbooks, establishing and communicating these expectations, especially for remote learners, will be key to monitoring students' participation and progress.

Students with special needs face even greater challenges in remote learning environments. Ensuring students and support staff have the resources needed to administer services virtually and the flexibility for students to receive in-person assistance will be critical to assisting with children's learning and development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the education system, and fundamentally altered the way education is delivered. It has also placed additional responsibilities on school administrators to monitor and protect the health and safety of students and staff. Although initial federal and state funding has been allocated to assist districts in covering the financial costs they are incurring to address these challenges, additional funding and support will be needed to provide the necessary resources needed to ensure meaningful and equitable education for students in a safe environment.

The following recommendations outline potential strategies for school administrators and legislators to consider as schools reopen and adjust to changes in their learning environments. In addition, long-term recommendations are outlined to expand contingency planning efforts and address inequities in education.

- **Focus initially on assessing the knowledge slide of students** due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak in the spring. Identify assessment tools that can be used to determine the skill levels and learning gaps for students.
- **Ensure equity in student access to remote learning tools.** Secure adequate funding to provide the electronic devices, internet access, and other resources needed for remote learning.
- **Establish guidelines for live instruction and asynchronous learning for students learning virtually.** Establish a schedule for learning sessions and activities, and set expectations for the duration of daily and weekly virtual learning sessions. Offer flexible options for students who may not be able to participate during designated live instruction periods due to parental work obligations.
- **Establish and communicate methods for tracking virtual student attendance and engagement** to ensure students and parents are aware of expectations and participating in remote sessions.
- **Offer opportunities for virtual learners to engage and connect with their peers and teachers.** Provide opportunities for parents and guardians to connect with teachers in order to provide input and participate in their child's learning.
- **Ensure students have access to support staff, including guidance counselors, special education staff, and school nurses or health staff.** Provide adequate resources to students with special needs in order to ensure equity in education.
- **Reevaluate the criteria and timelines for state and federal mandated testing** to take into consideration the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and make necessary adjustments, including developing standards for administering tests in an online environment.
- **Provide educators with access to professional development training to enhance their online instruction skills** and ensure they have the necessary technology tools and support to teach students in a remote environment.
- **Provide the technology and infrastructure needed to support remote learning for the long-term.** All students should have access to the technology and Internet access needed for remote learning. While school districts in our region have made strides to provide these resources using federal and state funding, some still are not able to offer these tools to all students.
- **Expand the availability of technical support staff within school districts to support students, parents and educators using remote learning technology.** As students and parents get acclimated to these technologies, there will likely be an increased need for support. Instead of relying on educators to address technical support issues, districts should establish procedures for parents and students to request and receive technical assistance as needed.
- **Develop contingency planning to mitigate and manage risk in the event of future crisis situations.** Schools were not adequately prepared to respond to the unexpected prolonged closure caused by the pandemic. Crisis plans should be developed in the event a future health crisis, catastrophic weather event, or other emergency situation leads to disruptions to the education system in order to transition to a backup online learning system.
- **Address disparities in school funding and resources tied to the socio-economic status of the community.** The financial and resource disparities between districts and individual students have been highlighted by the pandemic. Revise the allotments of funding and resources to ensure the needs of disadvantaged students and underserved populations are addressed. Provide resources and support for those facing housing and food insecurities and other threats to their health and wellbeing that impact their ability to focus on their education. ◇

# Appendix

Lackawanna County Fall 2020 Matrix of Learning Practices &

School Districts	Start Date	Overall Approach: In-person; Remote; Hybrid	Reopening Category in PDE Health and Safety Plan: Total, Scaffolded, or Blended Reopening, or Total Remote	Computers/Laptops/Devices available for take home?	Take Home Work Packets?	In-Person Instruction?	Synchronous Classes (if so, how many hours per day? Required or voluntary?)	Asynchronous Online Content (videos, message boards, other? Required or voluntary?)	Attendance Policies	Grading Policies	Instructional Technologies	District Cyber Program Option?	Meal Distribution	Other Resources Available to Students	Plan Submitted to PDE?	Notes	
<b>Abington Heights</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/5/20)</i>	9/9/2020	Beginning fully virtual, transition to in-person hybrid at date TBD	Total Remote	Y - Chromebooks available to all students in Grades 6-12. Available to students in Grades K-5 on an as-needed basis.		Beginning as early as late Sept.	Y - Elementary Grades K-4: live lessons of academic and specials courses. Middle and High School Grades 5-12: according to normal class schedules.	Y - Lessons available on demand	Attendance in live lessons is not mandatory for Grades K-4; mandatory for Grades 5-12.		Google Classroom				Y	Striving to begin a hybrid program Oct. 5 with 2 days/week in-person and 3 days/week virtual.	
<b>Carbondale Area</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/6/20)</i>	9/8/2020	Beginning fully virtual, transition to in-person hybrid tentatively 10/6/2020	Total Remote	Y - Limited availability of devices; issuing one per household.		Beginning as early as 10/6/2020							Y		N	District will decide on 9/22 whether to remain virtual or move into the second phase of reopening, which includes a blended model of virtual and in-person classes. The target start date for the hybrid reopening is 10/6.	
<b>Dunmore</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/24/20)</i>	8/26/2020	2 Options: Hybrid blended option or Remote option	Blended Reopening	Y - Devices made available to any family that requires it		Y - 2 groups on alternating days (M/Th and T/F)		Y	Attendance is mandatory; virtual attendance will be recorded based on work submitted	Grading will remain the same as pre-COVID-19, except Science and Social Studies in the Elementary Center will be Pass/Fail.	Google Classroom or Accelerate Education for virtual option				Y	Blended schedule alternating days of online and in-person classes, with a 100% virtual option.	
<b>Lackawanna Trail</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/10/2020)</i>	9/10/2020	Fully In-person, students can opt-out for virtual learning	Total Reopening	Y - Chromebooks available for all students	N	Y	Y - for virtual option									Y	
<b>Lakeland</b> <i>(Plan date: 7/24/2020)</i>	8/31/2020	Beginning fully virtual, transitioning to hybrid blended model (alternating days) starting October 5th	Total Remote	Y - Chromebooks available for all students		Beginning as early as 10/5/2020	Y - 4 days/week. Elementary Phase 1: 2.5 - 3.5 hours per day. Jr/Sr High School Phase 1: 3-4 hours per day, following bell schedule.	Y - Phase 1: 1 day/week for independent learning, individual tutoring, small group instruction, clubs, etc.	Attendance required and taken both in-person and during distance learning	Assignments will be graded just as they would in a traditional setting	Google Meet and Hangouts	Y		The district will work with families who need internet access. Specialized services such as Reading and Math support, ESL, Resource Room, OT, PT, Speech, etc., will be built into the schedule/ available during both "Live" and Asynchronous days.	Y	- Tier 1, Full Time Distance learning phase until 10/2. - Transition to Tier 2, In Person Hybrid Learning on 10/5 based on case volume, with students split into two groups with 2 days/week of in-person instruction. - Phase in return to 5 full days of in-person instruction.	
<b>Mid Valley</b> <i>(Plan date: 7/29/2020)</i>	9/8/2020	Hybrid Blended option with 2 days in person per week, with full virtual option	Blended Reopening	Y - Chromebooks available for all students in Grades 7-12. Provided to Elementary students in need upon request.		Y - 2 days/week with Hybrid option	Y	Y - 1 day/week	Attendance required, students must log into Google Classroom each day and (1) participate in a synchronous class, or (2) complete the Daily Attendance Assignment by the time specified by their teacher.	Grading will be consistent with regular practices as listed in student handbooks.	Google Classroom			Students with special needs may be offered individualized programs and services based on their unique needs. Teachers will provide increased face-to-face communication with students and families.	Y	Students will be split into two groups that attend in-person on alternating days (MT/RF) and virtually 3 days/week.	
<b>North Pocono</b> <i>(Plan date: 7/30/2020)</i>	8/31/2020	Hybrid blended option with 2 days in person per week, with full virtual option	Blended Reopening	Y - Chromebooks will be provided to high school students, and available to middle school students for limited use essential activities.		Y - 2 days/week with Hybrid option		Y			Google Classroom and Meet					Y	
<b>Old Forge</b> <i>(Plan date: 7/22/20)</i>	9/8/2020	Hybrid blended option with 2 days in person per week, with cyber option.	Blended Reopening	Y - Chromebooks will be provided to high school students and to families in need upon request.		Y - 2 days/week with two groups alternating (MW/TR)		Y - 3 days/week			Google Classroom	Y	Y	Life Skills, Emotional Support and Autistic Learners, and English Learners may attend Monday to Friday. Learning Support students requiring intensive intervention and accommodations, may report more than 2 days/week, as needed, and as space allows.	Y	Kindergarten students will attend daily in half-day AM or PM session, and half-day remote learning.	
<b>Riverside</b> <i>(Plan date 7/22/2020)</i>	9/9/2020	Tier 2: Hybrid blended option, alternating days. Move to Tier 1 (100% in-person) when possible). Tier 3 (100% remote) is also an option.	Blended Reopening	Y - Chromebooks provided to all students.		Y - Tier 2: two groups alternating every other day on a 6-day cycle	Y - Virtual days follow same class schedule, with students participating in livestream classes virtually	Y - Recording of the livestreams will be made available.	Attendance required and will be recorded daily.		Google Classroom and Meet.					N	With hybrid option, students will be split into 2 groups based on geography, and will alternate days of in-person learning on a six-day cycle. Transportation will only be provided for students in Grades K-6.

# Appendix

Lackawanna County Fall 2020 Matrix of Learning Practices & Resources																
School Districts	Start Date	Overall Approach: In-person; Remote; Hybrid	Reopening Category in PDE Health and Safety Plan: Total, Scaffolding, or Blended Reopening, or Total Remote	Computers/Laptops/Devices available for take home?	Take Home Work Packets?	In-Person Instruction?	Synchronous Classes (if so, how many hours per day? Required or voluntary?)	Asynchronous Online Content (videos, message boards, other? Required or voluntary?)	Attendance Policies	Grading Policies	Instructional Technologies	District Cyber Program Option?	Meal Distribution	Other Resources Available to Students	Plan Submitted to PDE?	Notes
Scranton <i>(Plan date: 8/10/2020)</i>	9/8/2020	Beginning fully virtual for at least the first marking period, transition to in-person hybrid at date TBD	Total Remote	Y - Chromebooks provided to all students.		Not initially	Y- Virtual instruction using combination of synchronous and asynchronous. Teachers must provide live or recorded instruction at least three times a week per course.	Y- Virtual instruction using combination of synchronous and asynchronous. All live teaching sessions must be recorded for students to watch at a later time.	Attendance required and will be recorded daily.	Regular grading practices during both virtual and hybrid phases	Google Classroom, Meet, and Zoom. Apex Learning. Grades K-5: Accelerate Education.				Y	District will assess quarterly for transition to hybrid or full-in person phases.
Valley View <i>(Plan date: 7/30/2020)</i>	8/26/2020	Beginning fully virtual through at least 9/28	Total Remote	Y - Chromebooks available upon request			Y - Asynchronous or synchronous virtual options are available.	Y - Asynchronous or synchronous virtual options are available.	Attendance will be taken	Regular grading practices	Google Classroom	Y	Y		Y	Older students have three to four live classes each day, each one 85 minutes.

# Appendix

## Luzerne County Fall 2020 Matrix of Learning Practices & Resources

School Districts	Start Date	Overall Approach: Restricted In-person; Remote; Hybrid; Cyber	Reopening Category in PDE Health and Safety Plan	Computers/Laptops/Devices available for take home?	Take Home Work Packets?	In-Person Instruction?	Synchronous Classes (if so, how many hours per day? Required or voluntary?)	Asynchronous Online Content (videos, message boards, other? Required or voluntary?)	Attendance Policies	Grading Policies	Instructional Technologies	District Cyber Program Option?	Meal Distribution	Other Resources Available to Students	Plan Submitted to PDE?	Notes
<b>Crestwood</b>	9/2/2020	Remote instruction until at least 10/1, or Cyber instruction	Total Remote*	Y - Upon request							Cyber option - Crestwood Cyber Academy for elementary students, Edmentum for secondary students.	Y	Y - Breakfast and lunch offered to cyber students.		N	Reversed previous decision to offer in-person classes to students initially and moved to virtual learning only until at least 10/1. Families can also choose cyber learning option. Enrollment has increased in Crestwood's Cyber Academy from 28 students prior to the pandemic to over 300 students as of 7/31/2020.
<b>Dallas</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/18/20)</i>	8/26/2020	Hybrid plan or Cyber instruction	Blended Reopening	Y - Chromebooks available for all students		Y - 2 days/week with Hybrid option	Y - 2 days/week with Hybrid option	Y - 1 day/week with Hybrid option	Attendance required; recorded daily and by class period	Work will be graded and report cards issued	Google Classroom and Google Meets. Cyber option - CompassLearning and Edgenuity.	Y		Internet access provided to all students in need.	Y	Planned for four modes: a complete closure with remote instruction, in-person instruction, restricted in-person instruction and a hybrid plan. Will operate in hybrid mode at the start of the school year. The hybrid plan splits the student population into two groups which will rotate between physically going to school 2 days/week and remote instruction 3 days/week.
<b>Greater Nanticoke Area</b> <i>(Plan date: 7/20/20)</i>	9/8/2020 <small>(Original start date of 8/31/2020 delayed due to water main break)</small>	3 Options: Hybrid, Virtual or Cyber instruction	Blended Reopening*	Y - Chromebooks available upon request; prioritized for Virtual and Cyber students first		Y - 2 days/week with Hybrid option	Y - some live instruction for Grades K-5, and 1 day/week for Grades 6-12 for Virtual option	Y - 3 days/week with Hybrid option. 5 days/week with Virtual option.	Attendance required and tracked	Work will be graded	Google Classroom, Class Dojo. Cyber option - Edgenuity	Y			Y	Hybrid option: students divided into two groups and have two days of in-person education and three days of online school each week. Group 1 - in person attendance M-T. Group 2 - in person attendance Th-F. Remote online work other 3 days. Virtual option: all online instruction.
<b>Hanover Area</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/10/20)</i>	8/31/2020	Remote instruction until 10/1, then Restricted in-person. Cyber option available.	Total Remote*	Y - Limited availability of Chromebooks or Tablets, some can be equipped with built-in Wi-Fi		Not initially. When in-person classes resume, groups will attend 4 days/week on an alternating bi-weekly schedule.		Y - When in-person classes resume, alternate bi-weekly between 1 day/week and 5 days/week				Y			Y	Three phases for reopening: - In Green and Yellow phases, students alternate attending onsite classes weekly. One half of students in each group (pre-K-6, 7-12) will attend onsite classes M-Th, and receive instruction online using distance learning the following week. All students will practice distance learning on Fridays. - Red: all instruction will be online through distance learning.
<b>Hazleton Area</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/4/20)</i>	9/8/2020	Remote instruction for the first quarter, phase in return to in-person instruction.	Total Remote*	Y - Laptops to be provided in priority order, awaiting shipment of additional laptops	Y - Provided to students without an electronic device until laptops become available	Not initially	Y - Students follow a set class schedule for instruction. If a student misses a scheduled class, they have the ability to make it up before the end of the day.	Y	Attendance required and tracked for each class	Existing grading policies in effect	Teacher-led video sessions through Microsoft Teams	Y	Y	Support services for Special Education, Gifted, and English Language Learners. Counseling and Psychologist Services. Increasing the Wi-Fi reach from school buildings into the parking lots, but can only connect to the Wi-Fi from computers that the school provides.	Y	Plan phases in the return to in-person classes. HASD will re-evaluate the situation every two weeks, and the prevalence of COVID-19 in the area will determine when students are given the option to return to in-person classrooms.
<b>Lake Lehman</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/5/20)</i>	9/8/2020	3 Options: Traditional in-person, Remote live-streaming, or Cyber	Total Reopening*	Y - available to all students in grades 3-12, and upon request to students in grades K-2	Available for remote and cyber options when applicable to their courses and grade level.	Y - for in-person option	Y - for remote option	Y - for cyber option		Grading scales will follow the regular format upon return to school. The modified, hold-harmless, grading scale offered at the conclusion of the 2019 20 school year will not be carried forward.	Teacher-led lessons through Zoom for Remote option. Cyber option - Accelerate Education through Brandywine Virtual Academy for elementary students and Edmentum for secondary students.	Y		Developed plan for students struggling with coping skills in relation to returning to school and Covid-19 related experiences. Developed plan for transitioning students between traditional and remote learning, and plan to provide equity in all learning groups and demographics.	Y	Parents can select from three academic options, and change their selection on a quarterly basis, if needed: 1. Traditional - Students return to school for in-person instruction with social distancing guidelines and protocols. 2. Live Classroom Streaming - Students maintain a Lake-Lehman instructional schedule but take classes from home. Classes will be live streamed. 3. L-L Cyber - Students use a cyber platform and receive guided instruction from a Lake-Lehman teacher.
<b>Northwest Area</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/10/20)</i>	8/31/2020	3 Options: Hybrid, Remote live-streaming, or Cyber. Students in Pre-K and Kindergarten will attend every day on a modified split schedule.	Blended Reopening	Y - Chromebooks available for all students		Y - 2 days/week for hybrid option	Y - 2-3 days/week for hybrid option	Y - for cyber option	Attendance required	Work will be graded	Teacher-led live-stream lessons through Zoom for In-person/hybrid model. Cyber option - Accelerate Ed for Grades K-5, Edmentum for Grades 6-12.	Y			Y	The In-person instruction/hybrid model will include alternating face to face and remote learning days. Students will be split into two groups. Group 1 will attend M & W, Group 2 will attend T & Th, and the Groups will alternate every other Friday. If Luzerne County returns to the yellow or red phase, the district would return to a full-time virtual model.
<b>Pittston Area</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/19/20)</i>	9/9/2020	Remote live-streaming or Cyber option	Total Remote	Y - Chromebooks available for all students		N	Y	Y - Virtual lessons will be recorded for students unable to view the live sessions.	Attendance required and recorded daily	Assignments will be graded. Grading procedures will be implemented as specified in the student handbook.	Schoology learning management system and Microsoft Teams. Cyber option Edgenuity and Odysseyware.	Y		Guidance services, student health services, and related service providers as per IEPs will be available to all students. Flexibility and understanding will be afforded to those students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans who need modifications and/or reasonable accommodations.	Y	Changed the original plan to have Grades K-6 meeting 5 days/week in a traditional environment while students in Grades 7-12 were scheduled for a hybrid schedule with in-person instruction 2 days/week and virtual live instruction 3 days/week.

# Appendix

Luzerne County Fall 2020 Matrix of Learning Practices & Resources

School Districts	Start Date	Overall Approach: Restricted In-person; Remote; Hybrid; Cyber	Reopening Category in PDE Health and Safety Plan	Computers/Laptops/Devices available for take home?	Take Home Work Packets?	In-Person Instruction?	Synchronous Classes (if so, how many hours per day? Required or voluntary?)	Asynchronous Online Content (videos, message boards, other? Required or voluntary?)	Attendance Policies	Grading Policies	Instructional Technologies	District Cyber Program Option?	Meal Distribution	Other Resources Available to Students	Plan Submitted to PDE?	Notes
<b>Wilkes-Barre Area</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/24/20)</i>	9/10/2020	3 Options: Traditional in-person, Remote live-streaming, or Cyber	Total Reopening	Y - Chromebooks available for all students		Y - for in-person option	Y - for remote option	Y - for cyber option				Y			Y	Students have the option to physically attend school or participate remotely for the first of the school year's two semesters. For the remote option, there will be a fixed camera in every classroom to stream each class live. A cyber remote-learning option is also available. Parents who do not select an option will be enrolled in the remote classroom option by default.
<b>Wyoming Area</b> <i>(Plan date: 7/30/20)</i>	9/8/2020	Remote instruction until at least Nov. 9. Cyber option available.	Total Remote*	Y - Chromebooks available for all students		N - Students can utilize Google Classroom and email to communicate with teachers.	Y - Teachers will be presenting interactive, live streamed lessons on a daily basis. Lessons will be recorded and posted to Google Classroom.	Y - Can be arranged upon request. Families commit to that mode for the entire marking period either in half day (morning or afternoon) or full day increments.	Attendance required; recorded daily and by class period. Students must be marked present for all of their classes to be marked present for the entire day.	Assignments will be graded. Grades will be numeric for the majority of classes at the Secondary Center. Letter grades will be assigned for all classes at the Elementary Center.	Google Classroom and Meet	Y	Y		Y	Changed from the original plan for hybrid instruction with students split into two geographic groups that would alternate in-person attendance weekly to a full virtual plan until at least Nov. 9. Expectation is for 5.5 hrs. of virtual learning each day a student is at home. Exception for some special education classes; those students will be allowed to come into the buildings under social distancing protocols.
<b>Wyoming Valley West</b> <i>(Plan date: 8/19/20)</i>	9/8/2020	Remote instruction until at least Oct. 9. Cyber option available.	Total Remote	Y - Limited availability of Chromebooks currently. Provided upon request to high school students first, followed by middle school, then elementary. Once shipment of additional Chromebooks is received, a device will be provided to all students in grades 4-12.	Y - Learning packets provided for Grades K-3, and for higher grade levels upon request.	Not initially. When in-person classes resume, groups will attend 2 days/week.		Y	Attendance required and recorded	All assignments will be graded for Grades 4-12. Students in grades K-3 will not receive grades for the first marking period; progress reports will be provided.	Google classroom, Edgenuity for Cyber option	Y			Y	Changed from the original plan for hybrid instruction with 2 days/week of in-person instruction and 3 days/week of virtual learning to a full virtual environment until at least Oct. 9.

\*Category not listed in Health and Safety Plan; assigned based on a description of reopening approach.

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