



School District of Pickens County

Building success beyond the classroom

School District of Pickens County
2020-2021 School Year

July 9, 2020



Dear Parent,

Thank you for your patience and understanding during these times of uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please know that our district completely understands your concerns and your need to know the 2020-2021 school schedule and instructional offerings. After researching various re-opening options, conducting parent surveys, focus groups, conference calls, and a thought exchange that involved hundreds of parents, staff members, students and community members, we will be releasing the *SDPC Reopening Plan* tomorrow Friday, July 10th. This detailed plan could be overwhelming, but we are confident it will answer many of your questions and concerns regarding the safe reopening of schools in Pickens County.

Our feedback and *Reopening Plan* has identified four distinct priorities:

1. Safety and well-being of students and staff;
2. Quality teaching and learning;
3. Economic perspectives for parent work schedules; and
4. Long-range district financial planning.

We firmly believe that student well-being requires face to face student-teacher interaction. Isolation leads to trauma and mental health issues for children. As a result, **school-wide face-to-face instruction will begin Monday, August 10th** for all SDPC students. As parents or guardians, you have a choice to allow students to attend school in person or to participate in the online SDPC Virtual Academy. This is an important personal decision for each family, and we have established a **Pickens County Virtual Academy enrollment deadline of Friday, July 17th**.

Instead of releasing a yearly schedule, we are preparing to release six-week schedules that will contain both face-to-face and online instruction. In our first month of school, we will attempt to create a sense of belonging in all grade levels and to prepare for eLearning instruction. The first two weeks of school will allow us to gather vital information from teachers, parents and students to adjust moving forward. To protect our students and to make sure we have a healthy workforce, these schedules will be updated periodically as we continue to monitor community outbreaks of the virus. After the first two weeks of school, we expect to alter our daily routines in every school to provide an even safer environment as we monitor daily the safety and well-being of all students and employees.

Superintendent's Office

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Six Week Schedule

Week 1	Aug. 10 - 14	All Students (at school face-to-face instruction)
Week 2	Aug. 17- 21	All Students (at school face-to-face instruction)
Week 3	Aug. 24 - 28	Only Students in *Special Programs AND Early Childhood (3K – 2nd Grades) attend in person eLearning (online) for all other students (3rd - 12th)
Week 4	Aug. 31 - Sept. 4	eLearning for All (No students at schools)
Week 5	Sept. 8 - 11	All Students (at school face-to-face instruction)
Week 6	Sept. 14 - 18	All Students (at school face-to-face instruction)

* for Week 3 - Students identified for Special Programs will be notified directly by District Leadership in Special Services

SDPC has identified our students in Special Programs and students in Early Childhood (3K – 2nd Grade) to be our highest priority for in-person face-to-face instruction. Note that we will provide face-to-face instruction to these groups at times when other student groups are being taught through Intermittent Virtual or SDPC Virtual Academy. Students targeted in the Special Programs group will be notified directly by our Special Services department.

Knowing that we must have key personnel to operate school including nurses, teachers, and SRO's, it is vital for families to keep in mind that within any six-week window, a school or grade level may revert to virtual online learning if the well-being of students or employees is compromised.

This is our best attempt in scheduling a month in advance, what is reality today may not be the same in August. Based on data from the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and Governor McMaster, be advised that the first six-week schedule may change prior to the scheduled start of school and force us to implement eLearning rather than face to face instruction on opening day August 10th.

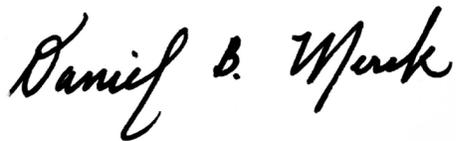
We will attempt to provide as much in person instruction as possible during each six-week schedule, however, the flu season combined with the Covid-19 pandemic may result in more eLearning. Also, if our county continues to receive a high spread rating from DHEC, then it is likely we will continue with the same six-week schedule as the first six weeks.

We are thankful and extremely proud of our teachers, counselors and principals for their superb communication during the last quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. We failed to contact only 24 of 16,300 students. Of the 24, most, if not all, moved to another county. The staff of SDPC remains committed to quality teaching and learning as is evidenced by the return of all principals for the second year in a row and

the retirement of just seven teachers this past school year. Individual schools will begin communicating with parents during the week of July 13th with more specific information about the upcoming year.

In summary, these are challenging times, and this is uncharted territory for all of us. We believe in-person instruction is best for our students, parents and community. We are conscious of the fact many families and students have struggled during the past four months. Our goal is to support you and to be as accommodating as possible when ensuring the safety of all students and staff. Every family is different, and we respect every parent's decision regarding in person instruction or the Virtual Academy. Whether your child is learning at home or at school, teamwork will be required to successfully navigate the upcoming school year. As parents YOU are a part of our team. We appreciate your feedback, promise to improve our delivery of eLearning this school year, and are looking forward to having your children safely back in school.

Best Regards,



Danny Merck
SDPC Superintendent

Questions ?

General Questions

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