Dear Seneca Valley Staff and Parent/Guardians,

We apologize for the late evening notice, however, we wanted to make you aware of several 2020-21 school year changes that took place earlier this evening during the regular school board meeting.

Due to the complex and rapidly changing conditions related to the pandemic – and the need for the District to adjust with them - the Seneca Valley School Board approved an extension to the first physical day of school, as well as a cohort delivery of instruction for the first four weeks of the school year.

This pivot in our plan will allow for less students to be in our buildings at one time. We also want to utilize this time to assure that all necessary policies are in place and fully prepared to function, including the protocols we are waiting on from the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) for addressing positive cases and exposure. We anticipate the addition of time will also allow us to continue working on unique building plans for creative learning spaces and fully train/prepare staff.

Specifically, the School Board approved tonight the following items:

- A delayed physical start date for all students to Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020.
- Utilize the Cohort Model for the first four weeks (Sept. 8 through Oct. 5), where students will be split into two groups based on last name A-L and M-Z:
  - Students with the **last name of A-L** will report to the school buildings on **Monday and Wednesday** and engage in remote learning for the remainder of the week.
  - Students with the **last name M-Z** will report to school buildings **Tuesday and Thursday** and engage in remote learning for the remainder of the week.
  - **On Fridays, students will have opportunities to check in virtually with their teacher.**
    - **Full-time cyber (SVAOC – Seneca Valley Academy of Choice) is available for families who choose that option.**
    - **Hybrid Instruction (part of the day in school/part of the day in cyber) is available for families who choose that option in the Cohort Model.**
- **On or before September 25, we will communicate to parents the instructional model (traditional, cohort or remote) that will begin on Oct 5. During the first four-weeks of the Phased Start, we will also provide parents with weekly updates.**
We are also excited to announce that we will be enhancing our instruction by utilizing livestreaming through a new Microsoft Teams feature that allows for more student and teacher privacy as well as better virtual interaction called the “Together Mode.” We are working in collaboration with our teacher union leaders to develop an agreement to include livestreaming, which addresses safeguards for privacy; and the promotion of digital citizenship, including appropriate online student behaviors.

As originally planned, professional staff will return on Aug. 20 to begin several weeks of preparation and training and will do so utilizing safety measures, including masks and social distancing.

A tentative schedule for a virtual meet-the-teacher for all students is currently being worked out for Sept. 2-4 and will allow for students in the various cohorts to meet their teachers virtually, as well as their school counselor and nurse. These details and much more will be shared as soon as they are finalized.

We realize you may have questions regarding these new developments. We will be spending the next few days working out more details and promise to provide more information soon.

Should you decide to change your learning model, after considering this new information, you may do so through the SV Portal by selecting the learning model icon and revising your choice. It’s important to note that if you have already chosen the In-Person option, there is no need to make any changes in the SV Portal (the In-Person option applies to the Cohort model approved this evening as students will be physically present in buildings; just fewer days). Parent/Guardians will only need to revisit the learning model options if they wish to change entirely their learning model (ex: in-person to cyber instruction or cyber to in-person instruction). To allow administrators ample time to develop student schedules, a choice of learning model must be changed as soon as possible and finalized by Friday, Aug. 14. We will offer additional opportunities to transition from one learning model to another at the conclusion of the first grading period.

Finally, and perhaps, most importantly, we are also asking for the help of our community members during this time:

- Any parent/guardian who experiences childcare issues can contact Seneca Valley Foundation Director Annie Mersing at communications@svsd.net for assistance in locating such local providers. We also ask for the assistance of our local township and borough leaders, as well as our faith-based communities, to help our parents who may experience childcare challenges.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to apply and work as a paraprofessional (classroom/building support), cafeteria employee, custodian substitute or bus driver. Any parent/guardian with a college degree is encouraged to contact Seneca Valley Human Resources if they are interested in substituting teaching as we can emergency certify these individuals. Clearances are required. To learn more, visit www.svsd.net/HumanResources.

It may sound like we say this often; however, we ask for your continued cooperation and patience during these challenging and fluid times. It’s also important to emphasize that we should not let these times divide us as a school community. We strongly believe we can and will get through this with your support and cooperation as our partners in education.

Thank you,
Seneca Valley Administration