

## Rationales for Option #1

1. There is no statute, regulation, or legally binding Order that requires the District to perform contact tracing or to exclude students from school that are not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. 28 Pa. Code § 27.71 does not include COVID-19 and 28 Pa. Code § 27.71 only requires the exclusion of symptomatic students. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)/Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) guidance acknowledges as much by listing the only two “requirements” for school districts as (i) reporting positive cases to the DOH for case investigation, contact tracing, and the issuance of quarantine and/or isolation orders and (ii) excluding symptomatic students from school.
2. The Board agrees that students that are COVID-19 positive, symptomatic or not properly masked during a potential exposure period should be excluded from school, but the Board also must consider the educational harm, social harm, the impact on mental health, and the other adverse consequences associated with excluding students from school for extended periods of time and sometimes for multiple, extended, periods of time. The Board feels that the ESSER Plan (which is different than a Board policy and not subject to the Board’s policy requirements) strikes the appropriate balance by continuing contact tracing, excluding COVID-19 positive students, excluding symptomatic students, and excluding students that are not properly masked during a potential exposure period, while allowing those students that were properly masked and that are not either COVID-19 positive or symptomatic the option to remain in school.
3. For those parents that would like to self-quarantine their child when an exclusion is not mandated, the ESSER Plan provides the right and option to do so. The Board feels that mandating the exclusion of students that were properly masked and not COVID-19 positive or symptomatic, even if it has the authority to do so (which is debatable), is not in the best interest of students, and that parents should have the option to either self-quarantine such students or elect to send them to school unless the circumstances change.
4. The Board understands that there are asymptomatic COVID-19 cases and that transmission can occur, but the reality is that students could be exposed to COVID-19 in any number of locations outside of school and then attend school because no contact tracing occurs in these instances; it is only done for exposures at school.
5. The District does not have the authority to issue isolation or quarantine orders pertaining to COVID-19. Despite an effort to continually delegate many of its duties to school districts due to a lack of DOH resources, only the DOH has the authority to issue quarantine or isolation orders.
6. The vast majority of students learn best when they attend school in person. Additionally, it is often extremely difficult to implement IEP’s and 504 Plans when students are engaged in remote learning. Many students have already suffered learning losses since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of 2020, and the Board fears additional learning losses if students are subject to repeated exclusions from school, even though they were properly masked and are not COVID-19 positive or symptomatic.