



Warren C. Evans
Wayne County Executive

Wayne County Department of Health, Human & Veterans Services

October 26, 2020

RE: Temporary Wayne County Public Health Division Guidance to School Districts

As you are aware, the number of COVID-19 cases in Wayne County continues to rise. Currently, Wayne County is at an overall Community Spread Risk Level E. This is the highest risk level on the state's Community Risk Determination Level. In addition, many communities have seen their risk levels move from low- or moderate risk to high or very high risk in just one week. County health officials share your concern about this increase, and this letter is intended to provide short-term guidance that will help school administrators and board members make the best and safest decisions for your students, teachers, staff, and communities.

The increase in risk level from last week to this week is substantial. It is being driven by a near doubling of positive cases in Wayne County over that period, and more specifically the last three days of last week. It is too soon to definitively say whether this trend will continue. COVID-19 cases across Michigan are on the rise and the percentage of positive tests for the coronavirus continues to grow.

The Wayne County Public Health Division will consider this week's risk level and the new level that will be calculated next week before making a definitive recommendation on whether in-person classroom instruction should be suspended. Such a decision will follow the guidelines outlined in the Wayne County Community Spread Matrix. Until that recommendation is made, the Public Health Division offers the following guidance to Wayne County school districts:

- For school districts providing online-only instruction option: Continue online-only instruction.
- For school districts offering a hybrid model that includes some level of in-person instruction AND have a COVID-19 Mitigation Plan that has been reviewed and APPROVED by the Public Health Division: Continue hybrid model instruction.
- For school districts with full in-person instruction: Continue with in-person instruction ONLY IF the district's COVID-19 Mitigation Plan has been reviewed and APPROVED by the Public Health Division.
- For school districts that DO NOT have a COVID-19 Mitigation Plan that has been reviewed and APPROVED by the Public Health Division: It is recommended such districts

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should HAVE SUCH A PLAN APPROVED BEFORE any form of in-person classroom instruction.

This guidance applies only to school districts that do not have any outbreaks as defined in the Wayne County Community Spread Matrix, and have APPROVED COVID-19 mitigation plans. IF YOU DO HAVE OUTBREAKS, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE WAYNE COUNTY HEALTH DEPT. TO DISCUSS FURTHER GUIDANCE.

We recognize school districts with reviewed and approved COVID-19 mitigation plans are taking reasonable and practical steps to provide an in-person education environment that is as safe as possible, even in instances of increased community spread risk. If COVID 19 cases continue to increase, and the community spread risk level continues at its highest level, the Wayne County Public Health Division will issue stricter guidelines that could include suspension of in person classroom learning in Communities with sustained high levels of COVID 19 cases.

The Wayne County Public Health Division will continue to work with Wayne RESA to monitor the case counts and risk levels in order to provide school districts with the appropriate guidance to ensure our students, teachers and staff are safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Carol Austerberry, RS, MS, MPA
Health Officer

Mouhanad Hammami, MD, MHSA
Chief Health Strategist