

October 15, 2020

Dear Superintendents, School Board Members, Private/Charter School Administrators and Parents:

On August 28, 2020, Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) provided updated recommendations for K-12 schools to consider transitioning to a hybrid or blended learning model. In that letter we referenced FCPH would not be making additional recommendations for schools until October to provide an opportunity to identify any new and emerging trends and wait until the start of flu season.

Many schools and districts are now in the process of transitioning from the hybrid or blended learning model to "all-in" or full in-person learning. As these discussions move forward, FCPH would recommend schools be cautious when making these decisions. In Franklin County Public Health's jurisdiction and across the state, the number of new daily cases is starting to rise. We are above the state's high incidence of cases greater than 100/100,000 residents over a 14-day period. As such, FCPH would recommend schools consider the following as part of its future decision-making process:

- Maintain a per capita case count of less than 50/100,000 over a two-week timeframe¹
- Review their "all-in" plan and timeline with FCPH prior to adoption
- Consider the operational impact of not being able to maintain 6 feet of separation (i.e. the number of students subject to quarantine is likely to increase)
- Continue to provide virtual option for parent/guardians who prefer distance learning

This recommendation is not a board of health order or mandate. Schools must balance public health recommendations with the educational needs of their students, faculty, staff and families and determine the best solutions for their school community.

As we begin to spend more time indoors, it's important to remember that what is happening in the community will continue to affect our schools. FCPH asks everyone to continue to do their part so that our children can remain in the classroom to the safest extent possible. Be sure to wear a face mask, wash hands often, keep 6 feet from others, avoid large gatherings and exercise caution for other social gatherings, get a flu shot and stay home if sick. Thank you for your continued vigilance to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in our community.

Sincerely,



Joe Mazzola, MPA
Health Commissioner

¹ District-level COVID-19 Data Report Prepared by OSU College of Public Health for Franklin County Public Health and Columbus Public Health`