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COVID-19 and Public Health Considerations for Education

Elizabeth Hertel, Director of MDHHS

Health Forum of West Michigan | March 5, 2021

Spring 2020

First confirmed COVID case in March 2020

Schools began distance learning

Fall/Winter 2020

Remote and in-person learning began, depending on district, college or university decisions locally

Late-fall surge led MDHHS to pause in-person learning

Winter/Spring 2021

In January, encouraged K-12 to return to the classroom by March 1

MDHHS provided toolkits, testing protocol, interactive Q&A sessions, and other guidance

Teachers and other school staff eligible for vaccine statewide

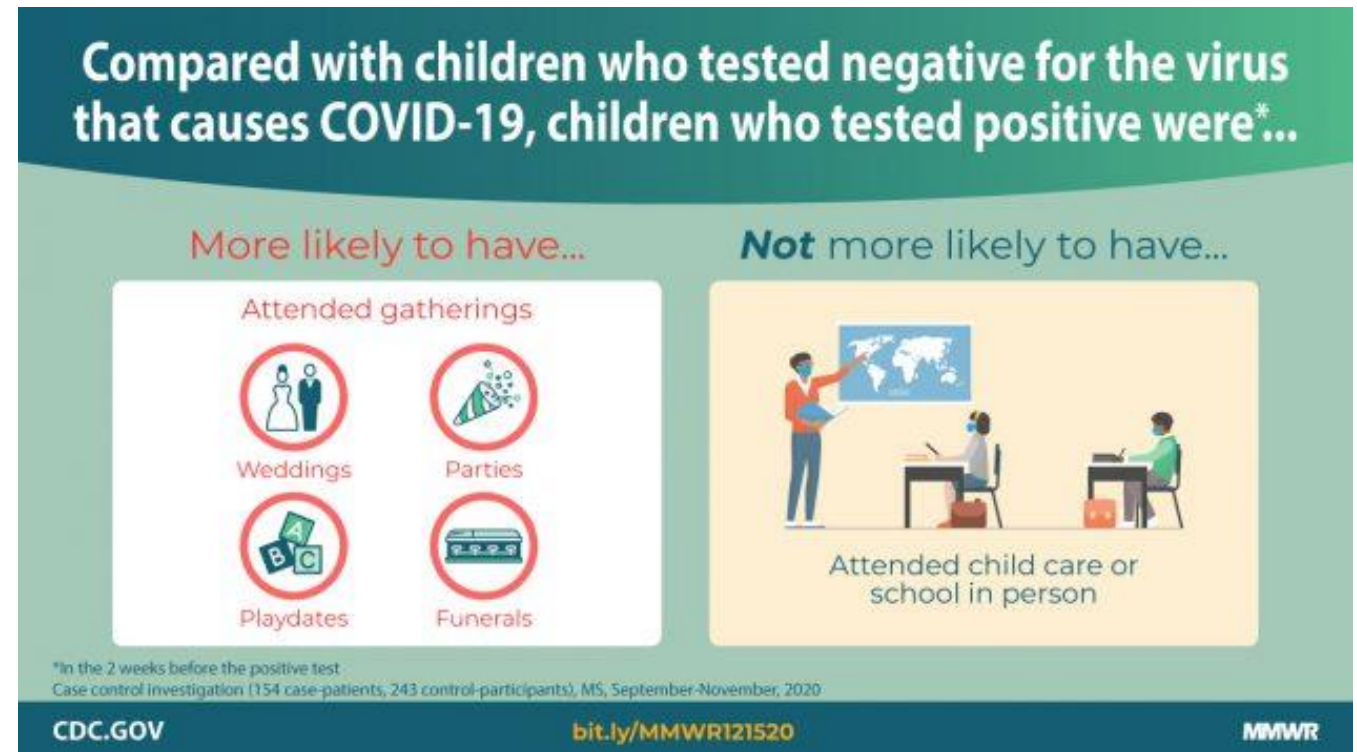
BENEFITS OF IN-PERSON LEARNING

- Contributes to mental health and reduces anxiety
- Critical to parents/caregivers continuing or going back to work
- Supports equity
- Reduces gaps in meals and immunizations
- In-person especially beneficial for:
 - Young learners
 - Economically-disadvantaged learners
 - Learners with special education needs
 - English language learners at any level of education



FACTORS TO SAFELY REENGAGE IN PERSON

- Risk determined to be lower than originally thought
- Younger children not major sources of transmission to peers or adults.
- Reengagement possible with strict mitigation and monitoring measures in place to make it as safe as possible





STATE OF MICHIGAN GUIDELINES FOR OPERATING SCHOOLS SAFELY



TESTING IN SCHOOLS



- Not a requirement, but a tool
- Encouraged as a comprehensive strategy in conjunction with:
 - Behaviors that reduce spread
 - Maintaining clean, sanitized and healthy environments
 - Preparing for when someone gets sick
- MDHHS offering a voluntary testing pilot program

VACCINATIONS

		Estimated schedule for first doses administered												
Phase	People covered	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1A	Healthcare workers													
	Long term care residents and staff													
1B	75 years+ not covered above													
	Prioritized frontline responders													
	School and child care staff													
	Corrections staff													
	Agriculture/food processing workers				March 1st									
	Other essential frontline workers													
1C	65-74 years old													
	50-64 with disabilities/pre-existing conditions				March 8th									
	Caregivers of children with special health care needs				March 8th									
	16-49 with disabilities/pre-existing conditions													
	Remaining essential workers													
2	50 to 64 years not covered above				March 22nd									
	16 to 49 years not covered above													

FEDERAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOLS



- In Dec., Congress passed bipartisan COVID-19 relief that provides financial support for K-12 schools that may be used for:
 - Coordination of coronavirus **response efforts**
 - Developing and implementing **procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response** efforts of local educational agencies
 - **Training and professional development** for staff of the local educational agency on sanitation
 - **Supplies** to sanitize and clean
 - School **facility improvements** that reduce risk of virus transmission
 - Upgrades and maintenance to **improve indoor air quality**

SAFETY PROTOCOL

Designated
point of
contact

Cohorting

PPE and
hand
hygiene

Spacing
and
movement

Ventilation

Health
screenings
and more

K-12 School Opening Guidance

Schools and learning are an important part of a community and of child development. The materials and resources below are intended to help schools and students “return to learn,” especially to reopen for in-person learning during COVID-19.

MI Safe Schools & MI Safer Sports COVID-19 Testing Programs: Office Hours

Drop in and ask your questions

Fridays, 9 – 9:30 am

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

MI SAFE SCHOOLS TESTING PROGRAM

DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SURVEY

**GUIDELINES FOR OPERATING
SCHOOLS SAFELY** 📄

MI SAFE SCHOOLS: RATIONALE 📄

**INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR
SCHOOL SPORTS**

**MANAGING COMMUNICABLE
DISEASES IN SCHOOLS** 📄

**CDC'S GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL
SETTINGS**