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Chandana Vavilala, M.D.

Health Officer

LAKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE SCHOOL RE-OPENING

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure that proper measures vital to the mitigation of the pandemic remain in place, Lake County Health Department is recommending the following:

Given the diverse nature of the school districts throughout Lake County, from urban to rural, it would be nearly impossible, as the Lake County Health Director, to issue a Health Care Directive which would specifically meet each of the needs of the various school districts. Therefore, as the Lake County Health Officer I am issuing the following set of recommendations which is based upon science and the COVID-19 numbers as they presently stand right now and would urge the school districts to use this information to best suit each of the school districts' respective needs.

The recommendations are color coded (Table 1) into categories depending on the community-wide positive percentage rate. Given the current rate of positivity in Lake County, the following recommendations are being put forth and as positivity rates change, the color-coded chart shown below will be available to guide schools in moving between learning models.

A. As the risk of transmission among the children under the age of 10 is lowest and in-person learning benefit outweighs the risk, all elementary students are recommended to be in school for in person instruction while maintaining safe distancing preferably 6 feet (3-6 feet acceptable), wearing masks correctly with proper hand hygiene.

B. All middle school and high school classrooms should be arranged to allow for 6 feet of social distancing between each student. Class size is not to exceed 50% of normal size capacity or more than 25 students in a regular sized classroom with all students facing the same direction. Provided that the total number of students on campus can allow for 6 feet of social distancing between each student, classes should resume as set forth in the preceding sentence. If the 6 feet of social distancing cannot be achieved on a school campus, classes should be conducted in a hybrid model (combination of on-line and in-person) or on-line only student instruction.

C. If a school moves to a hybrid or online model from in-person learning, this change should be made for a minimum of two weeks so that a trend in community positivity rate can be obtained and evaluated.

D. If a school includes more than K-5 in a single building, and at least 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained within the classroom, then all classes may continue without an on-line component (hybrid or on-line). Otherwise, grades 6 and higher will require a hybrid or on-line model at the school in addition to the in-person K-5 classes.

E. For schools with any portion of instruction being conducted in person, the following apply:

1. Passing periods must be staggered.

2. School meals must be served in the classroom, or students must be in cohorts in the cafeteria with the cafeteria being disinfected after each cohort.

3. Band, orchestra, and choir group practices should not commence until there is a further decrease in community positivity rate.

4. All teacher lounges and breakrooms should be closed, unless social distancing of at least six (6) feet can be maintained. Face coverings must always be worn in teacher lounges and break rooms, except while eating or drinking.

5. Student supplies can be only be shared within cohorts and should be disinfected regularly.

6. Access to student lockers must be limited in order to prevent students from congregating and to reduce the number of touch points in the school.

7. Permanent seating charts must be maintained in each classroom to aid with contact-tracing efforts.

8. Students in kindergarten and above, and all staff, must wear a face covering that always covers the nose and mouth. Mask-free time may occur while eating, drinking, at recess and during times when teachers consider it safe to remove the mask inside the classroom during quiet time while social distancing.

9. School bus drivers and all students who ride a school bus must wear a face covering that always covers the nose and mouth. Bus seating should keep children who do not share the same

household spaced three (3) to six (6) feet apart whenever feasible. Seats must be assigned. School bus windows should be opened to increase cross-ventilation when weather permits. Transportation by personal vehicle is encouraged.

F. It is strongly recommended that fall contact sports be cancelled to decrease the spread of the virus among athletes, communities and schools.

G. It is recommended that all schools provide opportunities for students and staff who are at high-risk for serious illness from COVID-19, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to opt out of in-person interaction with other individuals during school hours in compliance with ADA and FFCRA and other federal and state laws and regulations.

H. The Lake County Public Health Department will continue to monitor COVID-19 data and will make additional recommendations as needed based on that data.

It is recommended to the parents that there is an active parental partnership with schools. Families should be responsible community members by 1) avoiding gatherings without social distancing, 2) wearing masks regularly and 3) by taking all the precautions necessary for keeping the community well and the schools safe. Parents should monitor their children's temperature and other COVID-19 symptoms daily and not send children to school if sick. Children and staff must stay home when they are tested until results are available and further guidance provided.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chandana Vavilala', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chandana Vavilala, MD

Lake County Health Officer

8/3/2020
(Date)

Table 1. Lake County School Guidance on Safe Student Learning:

Lake County Percent Positivity	Level	Elementary School	Middle & High School
0 to 5	Green	in-person	in-person
6 to 10	Yellow	in-person	hybrid in-person/online
11 to 12	Orange	in-person	no in-person
13 and higher	Red	no in-person	no in-person

Table 2. Lake County Positivity Rates

Date	7/20/2020	7/21/2020	7/22/2020	7/23/2020	7/24/2020
Positivity Rate	8.4%	8.9%	7.7%	7.2%	6.4%
Moving Average	9.7%	9.4%	9%	8.5%	8%

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2393.htm> (accessed 7/31/2020)