



## *Press Release*

Contact: Martin Ackley, Director of Public and Governmental Affairs, 517-241-4395  
Bill DiSessa, Spokesperson, 517-335-6649

### **State Superintendent Supports New Guidance to Return to In-Person Learning**

January 8, 2021

LANSING – State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice supports the new guidance from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) today for schools to keep students, staff, and communities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic while providing the in-person instruction that is crucial to learning and development.

“In-person instruction matters,” Dr. Rice said. “Learning at a distance is not a substitute for in-person instruction for most children. With the necessary supports to protect their physical and social and emotional health, our students and educators are at their best with in-person instruction.”

The state’s goal is to have all Michigan school districts offer an in-person learning option for students no later than March 1, and earlier if possible.

“The guidance provided today will help get our students, teachers, and other staff members safely back into our schools and engaged in learning, which has been disrupted over the past 10 months,” Dr. Rice said.

The DHHS guidance today emphasizes use of scientifically proven methods of reducing the risk of COVID-19 spread, including mask wearing, ventilation improvements, frequent hand washing, and social distancing.

The infection control measures in the new MDHHS guidance include:

- When feasible, assigning children to cohort groups and limiting their interactions to their cohorts to reduce the number of contacts.
- Keeping individuals six feet from one another to the extent feasible, with creative use of school spaces to facilitate distancing.
- Providing adequate hand sanitizing supplies and reinforcing proper handwashing techniques.
- Improving air ventilation.
- Having staff and students conduct self-screenings for symptoms at home every day before going to school.

- Ensuring school plans are in place in coordination with local health departments if there are any positive COVID-19 tests.
- Having staff and students who either test positive or are close contacts of those who test positive follow the [guidance issued by MDHHS](#) as well as local health departments. Anyone who is considered a close contact of someone who tests positive but does not have symptoms should quarantine for 10 days under CDC guidance.

Today's DHHS guidance is for grades pre-kindergarten through 12 and includes early childhood education, such as Head Start and the Great Start Readiness Program.

Additional recommendations can be found in the State of Michigan Guidelines for Operating Schools Safely on [Michigan's Schools COVID Testing website](#).

# # #