

**Reopen
SMART
Return
SAFE**



Ad Hoc Medical and Public Health Experts Task Force Meeting



December 7, 2020



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Welcome and Introductions



The Impact of COVID-19 on Schooling

As Schools Go Remote, Finding 'Lost' Students Gets Harder ([The New York Times](#), September 22, 2020)

America's missing kids: Amid COVID-19 and online school, thousands of students haven't shown up ([USA Today](#), September 28, 2020)

Zoom school's mental health toll on kids

Academic and social development are likely to slip during online learning for many students
([American Psychological Association](#), October 13, 2020)

COVID stress taking a toll on children's mental health, CDC finds
The findings "highlight the importance of continued monitoring of children's mental health throughout the pandemic" ([NBC News](#), November 12, 2020)

As COVID-19 soars in many communities, schools attempt to find ways through the crisis ([Science](#), November 18, 2020)

UNICEF warns of a 'lost generation' and finds school closures are ineffective
([The New York Times](#), November 19, 2020)



The Case for Open Schools

“If we put in measures like universal masking, better ventilation... we know this can reduce risk... **The consequences [of not reopening schools] are devastating. We have virtual dropouts.** We have major school districts in the U.S. where a third of the kids are not logging in every day. Kids are less social, and the learning is different... According to UNICEF, **kids in school are less likely to suffer from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.** There’s a risk from COVID, but that can be managed in the classroom... **Kids out of school — and I’m talking about K-12 schools — is a national emergency,** and it is not being treated as such.”

Dr. Joseph G. Allen, Associate Professor of Exposure Assessment Science at Harvard University’s School of Public Health The Harvard Gazette, October 14, 2020

“We didn’t know a lot about the virus in the spring that we know now. **Overly severe restrictions not only lead to weakened compliance, but also disrupt schooling, work and actually lead to ‘very little public health gain.’**”

Dr. Vivek Murthy, 19th US Surgeon General, Co-Chair of President-elect Biden’s Coronavirus Task Force Interview on NPR’s Weekend Edition, November 15, 2020



The Case for Open Schools

“Close the bars and keep the schools open... If you look at the data, **the spread among children and from children is not really very big at all**, not like one would have suspected. Obviously, you don't have one size fits all. But as I said in the past, **the default position should be to try as best as possible within reason to keep the children in school, or to get them back to school.**”

*Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Interview on ABC's This Week, November 29, 2020*

“I am not alone in saying this situation is urgent. **If we don't act now, the future will be very bleak.** Americans need help, and they need it now, and they need more to come early next year. I must tell you I am encouraged by the bipartisan efforts in the Senate around a \$900 billion package for relief. It's a bipartisan effort. When Congress works out the details of this relief package, **they are going to have to focus on resources for direct public health responses to COVID-19.** We need meaningful funding for vaccines now... We need serious funding for testing now. **We need to ramp up testing to allow our schools and businesses to operate safely. The sooner we pass the funding, the sooner we can turn the corner on COVID-19.**”

*US President-elect Joseph R. Biden
News Conference in Wilmington, DE, December 4, 2020*



Newly Released FDOE Guidance

- [Emergency Order 2020-EO-07](#) released by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) on November 30, 2020, provides sustained financial support to school districts for the 2020-2021 school year.
- School districts:
 - Must continue to open brick and mortar schools at least five days per week for all students.
 - Must continue to offer the full array of services that are required by law.
 - Must continue progress monitoring and interventions, including expanded learning services such as after-school tutoring, Saturday Academy, and summer intervention camps.
 - Are authorized to continue the innovative learning modality. However, any student that is not making adequate academic progress in remote learning must be transitioned to another form of education delivery method.
 - Cannot unreasonably restrict the decision of a parent to alter the learning modality.
 - Must provide enhanced outreach to parents to ensure maximum in-person enrollment and participation in school.



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M-DCPS COVID-19 Prevention Measures

Operational Protocols	Facility Enhancements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required mask wearing by all students and staff.• Required daily pre-arrival health screening for all employees; continued encouragement of daily pre-arrival health screening for students.• Required employees' monthly acknowledgement of health screening and reporting protocols.• Reconfigured classroom seating to provide minimum one-meter social distancing (per WHO).• Reprogrammed air conditioning systems to operate before buildings are occupied and after they are closed.• Increased frequency of cleaning and sanitization, with deployment of over 1,500 germicidal sprayers with hospital-grade germicide.• Limited capacity in group restrooms.• Eliminated use of keypads in food service program.• Deployed trained medical personnel (nurses, Emergency Medical Technicians, etc.) to all schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Installed hand sanitizing stations throughout all facilities – entry points, common areas, hallways, classrooms, and offices – as well as buses.• Installed water bottle filling stations at all schools.• Replaced all (13,000+) air conditioner filters and installed MERV 13 filters where feasible.• Opened fresh air intake vents to maximum settings to increase air changes/ventilation.• Provided supplemental air filtration systems to windowless schools and Head Start Programs.• Installed transparent dividers in offices and other areas where staff interacts with the public.• Established isolation rooms at all schools.• Installed COVID-19 related posters/signage throughout facilities to reinforce and encourage compliance with protocols (e.g., social distancing, one-directional hallways/stairways, frequent handwashing, etc.).



COVID-19 Cases in M-DCPS

- Since schools reopened on October 5th, the number of COVID-19 cases among students and staff in our schoolhouses has generally followed trends for the entire county.
- Transmission in schools has not grown exponentially as some had predicted.
- It does not appear that COVID-19 is being spread in school but rather that individuals are infected when they arrive at school.
- When looking at county-level data from the Florida Department of Health, school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 14 account for roughly 5% of all positive COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County, 1% of hospitalizations, and 0% of deaths.
- Of 5,711 COVID-19 tests administered to M-DCPS employees at three on-site testing locations in the District, approximately 5% have been positive.

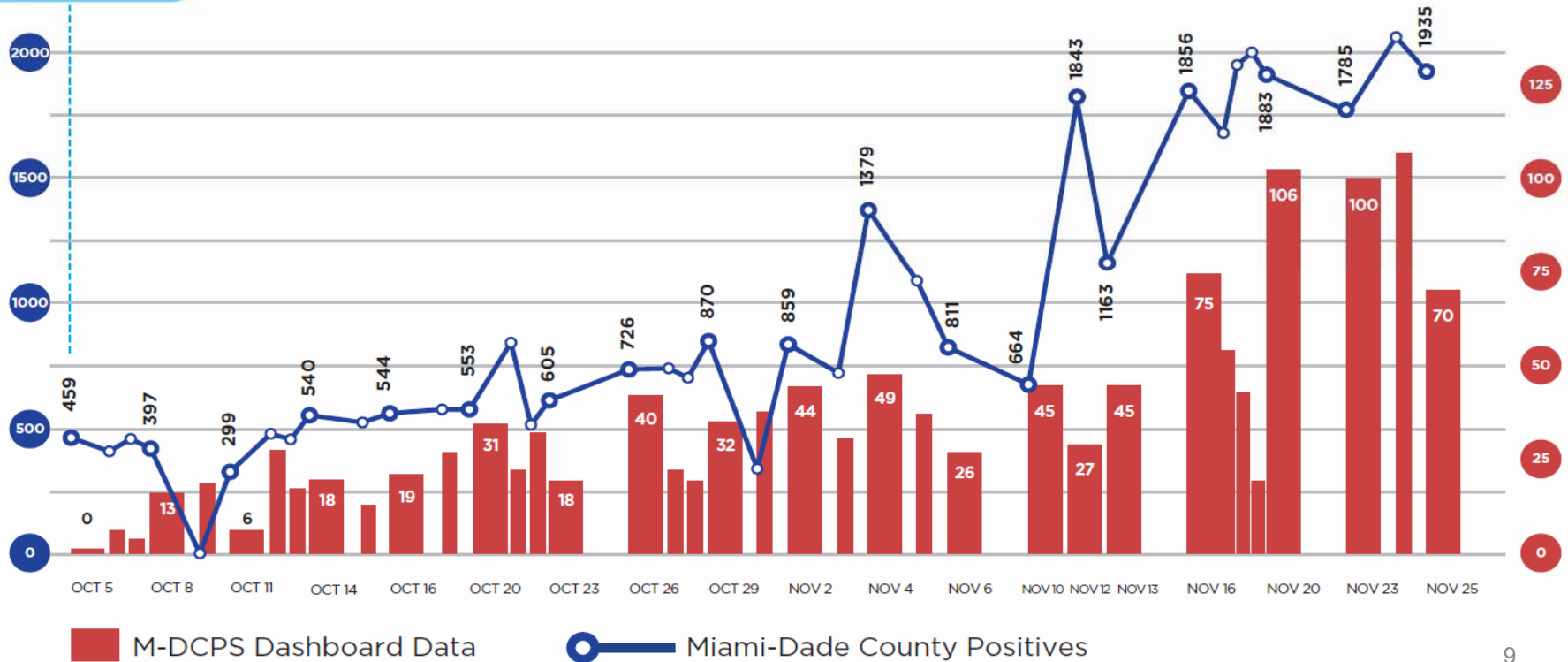


Comparison of COVID-19 in M-DCPS & Miami-Dade County

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Schoolhouses Open for In-Person Instruction

October 5





Revised CDC Guidelines

On December 2, 2020, the CDC released revised guidelines for quarantine stipulating however, that they still recommend 14 days as a general rule, with guidance as follows:

- Local public health authorities determine and establish the quarantine options for their jurisdictions. CDC currently recommends a quarantine period of 14 days. However, based on local circumstances and resources jurisdictions may consider if a shortened quarantine period is advisable as delineated below.
- Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
 - With this strategy, residual post-quarantine transmission risk is estimated to be about 1% with an upper limit of about 10%.
- *When diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available,* then quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen tests negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (e.g., in anticipation of testing delays), but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7. However, testing for the purpose of earlier discontinuation of quarantine should be considered only if it will have no impact on community diagnostic testing. Testing of persons seeking evaluation for infection must be prioritized.
 - With this strategy, the residual post-quarantine transmission risk is estimated to be about 5% with an upper limit of about 12%.
 - **In both cases, additional criteria including continued symptom monitoring and masking through Day 14 must be met.**

These recommendations for quarantine options shorter than 14 days balance reduced burden against a small but non-zero risk of post-quarantine infection that is based on new and emerging science.



Questions for Medical Experts

1. Are there recommendations regarding implementing more surgical quarantining guidelines?
2. Should schools maintain the 14-day quarantine period given current community conditions or consider the implementation of a shortened quarantine, if recommended by the FDOH in Miami-Dade?
3. Should protocols for athletic activities be modified based on positivity rates in the broader community?
4. Should we advocate for school site staff to be prioritized to receive vaccine once available?
5. What is the status of pediatric trials for vaccines, and will the FDOH be providing guidance to parents and guardians?
6. Do you have recommendations for additional mental health supports for MSO students?

