

# HLSD COVID-19 Mitigation Measures 2021-22 School Year

July 19, 2021 School Board Meeting

Thank you for being here tonight to share your perspective

We have kept our schools open for in-person instruction by strategically implementing a multilayered approach of mitigation efforts

- Masking
- Physical Distancing
- Cohorting
- Hand Sanitizing
- Cleaning/Sanitizing Buildings
- Contact Tracing with Isolation/Quarantine

# Built Upon Reentry Plan

- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Wisconsin Department of Health Service (WDHS)
- Waukesha County Public Health (WCPH)
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
- Local Medical Experts

While the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic is borne by older adults, the risk of severe illness in children should not be taken lightly. Research released by the Journal of the American Medical Association this May indicates **11.7 percent** of pediatric patients studied were hospitalized, and of those hospitalized, 31.1 percent were ill enough to require some form of intensive care. In addition, pediatric specialists across the country are working to understand and care for a growing number of children with **long-COVID-19**, also known as “long haulers” as well as children with **Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)** following exposure to COVID-19.



“While the development of the COVID-19 vaccine has been a modern medical triumph, and we are extremely optimistic about the data we’re seeing about its effectiveness in younger kids, now is not the time to get complacent,” said Dr. Michael Gutzeit, chief medical officer of Children’s Wisconsin. “We have come so far and we all have a role to play in limiting the spread of COVID-19. Until the vaccine is available to all ages, we strongly encourage everyone to continue to wear a **mask**, continue to practice social distancing when possible and, as always, continue to wash your hands thoroughly and often. Prevention remains the most effective strategy in overcoming this pandemic and we know these safety precautions work and can go a long way to limiting the spread of the disease.”

Dr. Michael Gutzeit  
Chief Medical Officer  
Children’s Wisconsin



Kids deserve the best.

“Together, we must assure **continued adherence to the mitigation strategies** that we know to be extremely effective in providing protection during in-person school and co-curricular activities, including athletics. As custodians of the safety of our children, please join in this effort.”

Dr. Ellen Ward  
Chair Department of Pediatrics  
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Health



Kids deserve the best.

In May some school districts ended or loosened mask requirements for students. Dr. Greg DeMuri, pediatric infectious disease specialist for UW Health, said this is the wrong message to send to families given the **more contagious variants that have increased spread among children.**

"We really need to be doubling down on our mitigation strategies in the next few months, in the summer and the fall when children return back to school," DeMuri said. "We're going to see continued transmission in children until we have a highly vaccinated population....."

Dr. Greg DeMuri  
Pediatric Infectious Disease Specialist  
UW Health

# The ABC Science Collaborative

## Coordinated by Duke Clinical Research Institute

### June 30, 2021

University of Utah Health  
University of Kansas and Children's Mercy Hospital  
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine & Public Health  
University of Oklahoma Health Science Center  
University of Michigan  
Case Western Reserve University and Metrohealth  
Harvard Medical School  
Duke University School of Medicine  
UNC School of Medicine  
Emory University and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta  
University of Louisville and Norton Children's Hospital  
University of Mississippi  
Washington University of School Of Medicine  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Los Angeles



# #1 Recommendation

Getting **ALL** students back to in-person instruction must be a priority.

# ABC Science Collaborative: Masking

Based upon studies out of North Carolina with more than a million students and staff, full in-person instruction can be safely implemented in K-12 schools with strict adherence to **masking**.

# ABC Science Collaborative

The combination of high **vaccination rates** and low community transmission may safely permit transitioning from mandatory masking of students and staff in K-12 school.

# ABC Science Collaborative

Importantly, high vaccination rates in elementary schools **cannot currently be achieved** because there are no approved vaccines for children under the age of 12.

# Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene using either soap and water or a waterless alcohol gel (at least 60% alcohol) is a central tenet of infection prevention.

# Distancing within Classrooms

3 feet of distance among elementary school students was sufficient to limit COVID-19 spread in an environment with universal masking, even during periods of high community transmission and before vaccines were widely available.

# Cleaning Practices

Standard cleaning practices coupled with diligent hand hygiene are sufficient to maintain the safety of the K-12 school environment, including spaces used for after school and aftercare and objects (e.g., books) that may be shared between people.

# Ventilation

In the setting of **strict adherence to masking**, school districts that rarely made changes to ventilation were nevertheless successful in preventing transmission of SARS-CoV-2.



# Ventilation

In the absence of masking, ventilation may become more important but should not be considered a substitute for masking. Among schools that implemented ventilation changes to dilute or to dilute and filter airborne particles, the incidence of COVID-19 was 35% and 48% lower, respectively, compared to incidence among schools not implementing ventilation changes.

# Quarantine

The impact of quarantine on school operations and attendance was substantial. This practice resulted in hundreds of thousands of missed days of school and work despite a secondary transmission rate of less than 1% when both parties were **masked**.

Modified quarantine policies that eliminate quarantine for those appropriately masked in schools should be implemented to promote in-person education. (Modified quarantine practices are limited to asymptomatic individuals in the classroom.)

# Screening

No existing data support the need for screening testing to ensure safe, in-person instruction when masking is in place.

# Limit Attendance of Sick Students and Staff

It is essential to continue a culture of “symptom-free” in-person environment, particularly as school transition away from mandatory masking practices.

# Key Takeaways from ABC Science Collaborative

1. Encourage vaccination
2. Adhere to proper **masking**
3. No need to quarantine if both parties are masked or if close contact is vaccinated
4. Use in-school transmission rates as metric, not community transmission

# Key Takeaways from ABC Science Collaborative

5. Physical distancing should not be the limiting factor for determining in-person instruction when appropriate adherence to masking is present
6. Continue standard cleaning practices. Deep cleaning of objects is not required.
7. Increased ventilation in unmasked environments
8. Provide access to symptomatic testing and testing after exposure

# Superintendent Recommendations

- Return to in-person instruction for **ALL** students (No virtual option)

# Superintendent Recommendations: Masking

- Require masks indoors for students 11 and under. (Masks will become optional once students have had sufficient time to be vaccinated.)
- Make masks optional for students who have been vaccinated (12 and over).
- Masks must continue to be worn on school buses (CDC order issued 10/29/21).



## Superintendent Recommendation: Isolation & Quarantine

- Continue to remove students from school if they display symptoms of COVID. To return to school students must have a negative COVID test. If parents choose not to have their child tested, they must remain at home for 10 days.
- Continue to contact trace and require students to quarantine if they are identified as a close contact, with the exception being if both individuals are masked or the exposed student is fully vaccinated.

# Superintendent Recommendations: School Setting

- Eliminate the strategy of cohorting students in the same group all day
- Return to more collaborative classroom set-up with desks in pods, small group instruction, morning circles, and mini-lessons on the rug
- Resume extra curricular activities including clubs, sports, and concerts
- Allow visitors and volunteers in the building
- Continued increased ventilation and ionization system
- Continue cleaning rooms on a regular basis
- Continue good hand hygiene

# Superintendent Recommendations

- Continue district dashboard to monitor school transmission
- These recommendations are subject to change based upon classroom and school transmission rates