



## JOINT STATEMENT FROM HANCOCK COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS ON 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Hancock County Families,

On behalf of the four Hancock County public school corporations, we appreciated the patience and understanding of our families and communities during spring months of distance learning. Each corporation is working closely with each other and the Hancock County Health Department to craft guidelines for our return to school in the fall. At this time, all Hancock County schools will resume class on their scheduled start dates.

In mid-June, the Indiana Department of Education released a guidance document for the reopening of Indiana schools. This document, called [IN-CLASS](#) (Indiana's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools), provides guidance to Indiana schools regarding their reentry planning for the 2020-2021 school year. The Hancock County superintendents reviewed the document and collaborated with the Hancock County Health Department to create the return to school guidelines for each of the schools in the county. This is based on guidance from the Indiana State Department of Health, Indiana Department of Education, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As the health of the county changes, this guidance may change.

The safety of all Hancock County students, families, teachers, and staff is always our first priority. All staff at our county schools will receive training on COVID-19 symptoms and protocols as we prepare to welcome your children back to our classrooms. The four corporations will adhere to the following county-wide school guidelines:

### Physical Health

- Families will self-screen for symptoms including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. These symptoms warrant consideration for exclusion from school, and students and staff should stay home if they exhibit any of these symptoms.
- Students and staff should be fever-free for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to school. If students and staff experience a fever, a doctor's note will be considered for return to school in non-covid cases. If students or staff experience a fever and do not visit a doctor, a minimum exclusion from school is a recommended 3 days after resolution of the fever.

## Environmental Health

- Staff and students should have a mask with them at all times. While masks will not be required for students at all times, there will be certain situations when wearing a mask will be required (i.e. passing periods, larger class sizes).
- Schools will promote social distancing by maximizing instructional spaces and scheduling flexibly.
- Students can expect assigned seating on the bus, in classrooms, and in the cafeteria. This will be documented and available to the health department upon request.
- Schools will reduce capacities in cafeterias and maximize alternate eating areas to maintain proper social distancing during lunches. Food products from home are acceptable for individual student lunches. There will be no sharing of food among students.
- Schools will enact enhanced cleaning procedures in classrooms, common areas, and on high-touch surfaces. Additional hand sanitizer stations will be installed and frequent hand-washing will be mandated.
- Schools will replace water fountains with bottle fillers to reduce communal drinking.
- Schools will separate student groups on playgrounds to promote proper social distancing and limit interactions between students.
- Capacity in locker rooms will be reduced to keep athletes socially distanced.
- Visitors and guests will be restricted in our school buildings.
- Schools will discontinue perfect attendance incentives to permit families to make the best health choice for their students.
- Student Immunizations must be up to date or an exemption filed with the school.
- Schools will identify isolated locations in school clinics to treat symptomatic students.

While we are united in these guidelines, implementation will be handled on a corporation-by-corporation basis.

Hancock County public schools, in conjunction with the Hancock County Health Department, are creating a common response plan for confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our schools. We will continue to consult with the health department and use their guidance to inform our districts' decisions to keep schools open. In general, if a positive case is identified,

- all rooms where the case was present must be closed immediately until deep cleaning can occur.
- the entire school--at minimum--will be closed by the local health department if positive close contacts cannot be identified.

We appreciate your support of Hancock County public schools as we look forward to a safe reopening for the 2020-2021 school year.

Dr. Lisa Lantrip, Superintendent, Southern Hancock Schools

Dr. Harold Olin, Superintendent, Greenfield Central School Corporation

Dr. Jack Parker, Superintendent, Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation

Mr. David Pfaff, Superintendent, Eastern Hancock Schools