

MI SAFE SCHOOLS TALKING POINTS

GOVERNOR WHITMER'S MI SAFE SCHOOLS ROADMAP SHOWS HER COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING OUR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS FROM COVID-19

- The governor has brought together public health experts, educators, parents, students, educators, school board members, and community leaders to develop a real plan for our schools in each phase of the MI Safe Start Plan.
- The governor's comprehensive plan provides districts with guidance on the use of PPE, good hygiene, cleaning/disinfecting, transportation, athletics, and more.
- In recognition that these protocols will cost money, the Governor also announced that she was allocating \$256 million to support each district's ability to implement their local plans.
- The Roadmap also recognizes the impact COVID-19 has had on students' and educators' mental health, and offers guidance on how schools can address this issue.
- This is a smart plan that will help districts across the state protect our students and the more than 100,000 educators who have dedicated their lives to helping our kids grow.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN DO AS WE PREPARE TO REOPEN SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN THE FALL IS CLOSELY EXAMINE THE PUBLIC HEALTH DATA AND REMAIN VIGILANT IN OUR STEPS TO FIGHT THIS VIRUS

- Governor Whitmer has always relied on data, science, and recommendations from experts to protect Michigan families from COVID-19, and this plan reflects that.
- I am confident that the governor will continue to follow the data closely and remain vigilant as we continue working to protect families from this virus and lower the chance of a second wave.

IT'S STILL CLEAR THAT IN ORDER TO HELP ENSURE OUR KIDS CAN SAFELY GET A GREAT EDUCATION IN THE FALL, WE NEED SUPPORT AND FLEXIBILITY FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Michigan and states across the country are facing severe budget implications as a result of COVID-19.
- We need Congress to pass additional financial support for our states so we can ensure a great education for our kids and continue providing Michigan families with crucial services.

Q&A

WHAT ABOUT SPORTS?

- The MI Safe Schools Roadmap outlines protocols for athletics in different phases of the MI Safe Start Plan.
- For example, in Phase 4:

- Students, teachers, and staff must use proper hand hygiene techniques before and after every practice, event, or other gathering.
- Every participant should confirm that they are healthy and without any symptoms prior to any event.
- All equipment must be disinfected before and after use.
- Spectators are allowed provided that facial coverings are used by observers and six feet of social distancing can be maintained at all times.
- And more.
- The Michigan High School Athletic Association and the National Federation of State High School Associations are continuing to develop guidance for how sports can be played safely. Schools should follow this guidance.
- The governor is also calling on the Michigan High School Athletic Association to consider postponing Fall Sports that where social distancing is impossible to the Spring – and running some of the more individualized sports like track and field, tennis, and soccer in the fall.
- MHSAA (M-H-S-A-A) is a private organization that regulates high school sports – but I think this idea has a great deal of merit.

WILL KIDS HAVE TO WEAR MASKS ALL DAY AT SCHOOL?

- The MI Safe Schools Roadmap outlines protocols for PPE in different phases of the MI Safe Start Plan.
- For example, in Phase 4:
 - Facial coverings must always be worn by staff except for meals.
 - Facial coverings must be worn by preK-12 students, staff, and bus drivers during school transportation.
 - Facial coverings must always be worn in hallways and common areas by preK-12 students in the building except for during meals.
 - Facial Coverings must be worn in classrooms by all staff and students grade 6-12 only.
- In Phase 5, these will also be strongly recommended, but there will ultimately be some flexibility and local communities will need to document their decision in their plan.

WHAT ABOUT KIDS WHO HAVE A CONDITION THAT DOESN'T ALLOW THEM TO WEAR A MASK?

- Any student or staff member who cannot medically tolerate a facial covering must not wear one.
- Any student or staff member that is incapacitated or unable to remove the facial covering without assistance, must not wear a facial covering.

HOW WILL THESE PLANS BE ENFORCED?

- The governor signed an executive order that requires that school districts adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan laying out how they will protect students and educators across the various phases of the Michigan Safe Start Plan.

- The *MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap* offers guidelines as to the types of safety protocols that will be required or strongly recommended at each phase.
- If a school does not have a plan that is approved by their local school board, they can't open up for face-to-face instruction.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE HAVE TO MOVE BACK TO PHASE 3 OF THE MI SAFE START PLAN AFTER REOPENING SCHOOL BUILDINGS?

- The governor's MI Safe Schools Roadmap outlines protocols each district should take if the state is in phases 1-3 of the MI Safe Start Plan.
- Nobody wants to move backward.
- That's why it's crucial that all of us do our part to protect Michigan families from the spread of this virus.

WHAT ABOUT FAMILIES WHO DON'T THINK IT IS SAFE FOR THEIR CHILDREN TO RETURN TO SCHOOL IN-PERSON? WILL SCHOOLS BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE A REMOTE OPTION?

- The Governor will be working closely with the legislature to make sure that families are able to make this decision, and that schools have what they need to support students who need to learn from home.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS A CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASE AT SCHOOL?

- The Roadmap outlines the recommended protocols if this happens.
- Most importantly, every school district will be required to fully cooperate with their local public health department on proper protocols around testing, contact tracing, and quarantine.

DOES THE PLAN REQUIRE THAT DESKS ARE AT LEAST SIX FEET APART?

- No, this is a recommendation but not a requirement.
- Which is why it is so important for facial coverings to be worn at all times indoors, especially for students in grades 6-12 and staff.

HOW WILL DISTRICTS PAY FOR THESE REQUIREMENTS?

- Today the Governor announced **\$256 million** new dollars from the federal CARES Act to help district implement their local plans.

ARE PRIVATE SCHOOLS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS?

- Yes, particularly if their school is in a Region that is in Phase 4 of the MI Safe Start program. Just like public schools, if we move backwards to Phases 1-3, private schools will also need to close for instructional purposes.