

# Back-To-School Plan Update

July 27, 2020

## How Does the Current Data Look in Dane County?

The [Dane County COVID-19 data](#) is assessed using nine (9) measures. On July 20, the county released the metrics for July 4-17. Due to the backlog of negative tests in the system that need processing, they did not calculate percent positive and number of test metrics this week. We are green in four (4) metrics, **yellow** in the metric that measures the proportion of new cases over the past 14 days that do not know where they contracted the virus (community spread), is **red** in the metric for the low incidence threshold of 4 cases per day (currently avg. 80), and **red** in the metric for contract tracing which ensures that positive cases are contacted quickly to facilitate rapid isolation and quarantine.

Locally, data provided through the Department of Health Services shows that Deerfield (census tract 119) had:

Date	# of cases
6/15	10
6/21	11
7/14	21
7/21	26

(source: [Madison365.com](#))

## What Does That Mean For Our Back-to-School Plans?

- **Our priority is to begin the new year of student learning in the best ways possible with the least risk possible based on the most current science-based evidence.**
- Public Health officials are very concerned with this data and are reviewing models to determine if schools should open and when they should close. They believe that they may have a model ready to be released in two weeks (beginning of August).
- Children 0-9 years of age: There have been a number of studies and research gathered in the past several months that indicate that younger children present much less risk related to the transmission of the disease. This data may change once schools reopen. Public Health Madison Dane County is closely following the data on the primary grades age group in structuring reopen criteria and metrics.
- Children 10-19 years of age: A [recent study from South Korea](#) including over 59,000 contacts, provides the most comprehensive information on children with COVID-19 to date. The study found that children 10-19 years of age can spread the virus at a rate similar to adults. This has increased concerns for students in grades 5-12.
- Adults (staff): Similarly, and more difficult to predict, is the impact on school employees who are in a wide range of ages, all which are showing a more severe impact from contracting the virus compared to younger children.
- There is continued concern for how the virus may present itself when large numbers of students and staff are brought back together within a closed setting this fall.

Based on the current data for Dane County and the Deerfield area at this time, the most appropriate approach is to begin the school year with At-Home learning for all students during the first quarter with a gradual reopen as Dane County metrics and PHMDC guidance allows.

- Consider a phased-in reopen approach that brings back small groups of students or grade level cohorts back into school in increments.
- Use guidance from PHMDC, DHS and CDC to determine timeline, cohort size and age groups to be phased-in.
- Build Phased-In plans in two week increments to allow students and staff to adjust to a new routine, allow closer monitoring of in-person student and staff health, and is similar to the monitoring time frame used by the county.
- May include a shortened day schedule to adjust to a new normal of limited movement and face coverings, allow for staggered arrival and departure times and provide staff with family contact time, faculty meetings and planning time.
- Even when a gradual reopen takes place, staff, students and families must be ready to return to virtual learning at any time with limited notice.
- Students and families wanting or needing to stay with At-Home learning once the Phased-In process begins would be allowed to do so.
- During the At-Home learning phase, if possible, we will seek small group instruction opportunities to provide academic support and structured lessons.