

Timeline of COVID-19 Communications

This timeline represents the various communications that took place from mid-June through the end of July leading up to an administrative recommendation to the school board to consider starting the school year with At-Home virtual learning. Dane County status meetings are held weekly with Public Health Madison Dane County (PHMDC), officials, Dane County Emergency Management officials and Dane County Superintendents. It is important to note that the Deerfield Community School District falls under the jurisdiction of Dane County, therefore, decisions made by the county and county health officials must be followed.

6/18/2020: Family Update from School District

- Family Communication letter emailed to all families

6/22/2020: [DPI Education Forward Plan](#) released with recommendations to schools

6/23/2020: PHMDC Update

- **Will review the DPI materials and work to put forth accompanying orders and guidance by the end of the week.**
- Large number of cases the weekend of June 20 and 21, 70 people tested positive for COVID-19 in Dane County.
- Trend of increasing number of cases; several recent days with case counts of 20+
- Two metrics turned red:
 - The measure for community spread turned red. 33% of cases who tested positive didn't know where they could've gotten COVID-19, up from 24% from the last data snapshot.
 - The measure for COVID-like illness turned red. There was a statistically significant increase in the number of COVID-like syndromic cases within the most recent 14 day period.

6/25/2020: PHMDC update

- Spike of cases in Dane County-7-day case average to 35 cases per day.
- 7-day average from mid-June was 17 cases per day. Tuesday, 6/23 alone we had 63 new cases.
- 33% of cases who tested positive didn't know where they could've gotten COVID-19 (community spread), up from 24% from the data snapshot in previous week.
- **Status on developing school requirements: hoped to have them ready to share on 6/26, not able to do so before the week of July 6th because:**
 - **Data is trending in a direction that is concerning**
 - **We are largely focused on COVID data and disease transmission and without a vaccine or treatment, the best prevention tools we have are physical distancing and wearing face coverings and masks.**
 - **Need more time to monitor our data and determine requirements that can balance risk mitigation with some needed flexibility for schools.**
 - **Next couple weeks will be closely monitoring data metrics**

Current direction of PHMDC

- Do not anticipate allowing any Dane County school to open at full capacity
- Schools should plan for both hybrid and 100% virtual education models
 - If schools start off as a hybrid model, community data metrics and/or school outbreaks might cause schools to switch to being 100% virtual.

6/30/2020: PHMDC Update

- The metric for cases per day turned red during this 14-day period.
- Cases per day ranged from 13 to 115, with an average of 44 cases per day.
- The community spread metric turned red, and this week the percentage went up.
- Currently, 37% of cases who tested positive didn't know where they could have gotten COVID-19, up from 33% in the last data snapshot.
- Amendment to phase two orders in response to the steep increase in positive cases.
- **Additional school requirements for fall will come from PHMDC after July 6th.**
 - Contact Tracing Question:
 - If someone is wearing a cloth face covering, has a plexiglass barrier and is a close contact (15 mins, at 6ft) are they still considered a close contact and need to quarantine?
 - Yes, they would still need to quarantine. According to DHS, the presence of a plexiglass barrier would not be sufficient to say there was not close contact with a person who is positive, with or without a cloth face covering. While DHS says that plexiglass barriers help, there is not enough scientific evidence at this time to say that a plexiglass barrier decreases risk enough to not be any kind of exposure. There are many factors and there might be a cumulative build up of aerosols that could float over the plexiglass shield.

7/2/2020: PHMDC update

- Dane County is still seeing a sustained, high number of cases.
- From June 13 through June 26, 614 people tested positive.
- [Updated order #7](#) released changing mass gatherings back to a limit of 10 people inside and 25 people outside

7/6/2020: Committee of the Whole Board Meeting (can be viewed on wdee.org)

- Fall Back-to-School report begins at 1:15:55 to 1:32:00 on the recording
- **Provided update, stated that PHMDC guidance for schools has not been released yet, scheduled for week of July 6**
- PHMDC required protocols developed and shared with school board including; Facility Cleaning Guidelines, Hygiene Guidelines, Protective Measures Guidelines, Workplace Requirements, Work Rules for Ill Employees, Employee Health Reporting Agreement
- PHMDC required training for all employees implemented on July 6 via training slides with videos

7/7/2020: PHMDC Update

- Cases per day ranged from 35 to 144, with an average of 90 cases per day.
- Community spread is still red. Down to 33% from 37%.
- **No school fall requirement update at this time. Will share an update as soon as fall requirements are released.**

7/9/2020: PHMDC Update

- PHMDC issued Order #8 on July 8 requiring face masks be worn for all persons age 5 and older
- Without a vaccine or an effective treatment, we don't have very many tools we can use to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Wearing masks is one of the few important tools we have to slow the spread.
- **Working on fall school requirements as quickly as possible and reviewing local data and emerging guidance. At this time, we are planning to release requirements next week.**

7/14/2020: Family Update from School District

- Family Communication letter emailed to all families

7/14/2020: PHMDC Update

- The number of cases per day metric was red in the last data snapshot, and it remained red during this 14-day period. Cases per day ranged from 42 to 144, with an average of 98 cases per day. An average of 5.5% of tests were positive during this period.
- The measure for community spread got better and went from red to yellow. In last week's snapshot, the community spread metric was red and 33% of cases who tested positive didn't know where they could have gotten COVID-19. This number is now 28%, which turned it yellow.
- Initial requirements for schools will focus on foundational, evidence-based risk mitigation measures to help schools make informed decisions for any 2020-2021 school planning and help protect the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff
- Requirements *don't* constitute a decision from PHMDC about whether or not to open schools for the 2020-2021 school year as scheduled, but are rather the minimum safety measures that must be in place *if* schools are to reopen.
- **With over six weeks until the school year begins, it is not possible to make a definitive decision today about re-opening schools when so much could change.**
- Monitoring conceptual models incorporating metrics and criteria that **help to determine if schools will open and *when* they would close.**

7/16/2020: PHMDC Update

- 2020-2021 PHMDC school requirements were released:
https://www.publichealthmdc.com/documents/school_requirements.pdf
- **Announced they are monitoring conceptual models incorporating metrics and criteria that help to determine if schools will open and *when* they would close.**

- All schools should continue to be prepared to support all students with other learning models, including modified/hybrid and 100% virtual learning.
- Using a data informed approach with schools and throughout our whole COVID response
- Requirements around the use of common spaces (cafeteria, gym) being worked on.
- Currently events in the schools are required to follow mass gathering requirements (10 inside and 25 outside).
- **If someone in a classroom tests positive, then the whole classroom would quarantine**

7/20/2020: School Board Meeting (can be viewed on wdee.org)

- [Back to School plan](#) presentation begins at 38:50 on the recording.
- Publicly share two new pieces of information shared from PHMDC:
 - PHMDC is in the process of creating gating criteria or metrics to determine *if* schools should reopen and when they should close.
 - **PHMDC response to a positive case of COVID-19 within a classroom cohort will be to quarantine the entire cohort (students and adults). Any in-person scenario has tremendous potential for repeated, ongoing disruption for student learning, staff instruction and families.**

7/21/2020: PHMDC Update

- Average number of cases per day went down from last snapshot, first time this has happened since May 18.
- The number of cases per day metric was red in the last data snapshot, and it remained red during this 14-day period. Cases per day ranged from 40 to 120, with an average of 80 cases per day, down from 98 in the last snapshot.
- Requirements for the fall school year for common spaces (cafeterias, gyms) will be forthcoming.
 - Schools are currently required to follow mass gathering requirements (10 inside and 25 outside).
- Data specific to school aged children/youth (5-18) from the beginning of the epidemic through July 11th.
 - 205 children/youth tested positive for COVID-19 (7% of all cases). 57% of this group are teenagers (age 13-18).
 - Children/youth that identify as Black, Hispanic, and female are overrepresented in COVID cases compared to their representation in the overall Dane County population.
 - 60% of the children/youth had documented symptoms, compared to 76% for ages 19+

New study came out from South Korea. It is the most robust school reopening study to date with a much larger sample size (65,000) than previous studies and a more rigorous research design and methodology; praised by top scientists while still acknowledging some limitations.

- Suggests that children 10-19 can spread the virus at least as well if not more than adults (potentially more on account of the social behaviors).

- Also suggests children younger than 10 transmit to others much less often than adults, but this could change in school environments with dozens of other kids and contacts; theories for decreased transmission include decreased lung capacity/exhaling among young children and exhaling “lower to the ground” (keep in mind these are just theories and don’t translate to other communicable diseases, but could be true of COVID).
- The study suggests that transmission will take place within schools and to plan for it.
- Questions remain around transmission of asymptomatic children; symptomatic definitely infectious.

7/22/2020: Family Update from School District

- Family Communication letter emailed to all families
- [Back-to-School Plans](#) link shared in the email letter
- Email letter includes two new pieces of information shared from PHMDC:
 - PHMDC is in the process of creating gating criteria or metrics to determine *if* schools should reopen and when they should close.
 - PHMDC response to a positive case of COVID-19 within a classroom cohort will be to quarantine the entire cohort (students and adults). Any in-person scenario has tremendous potential for repeated, ongoing disruption for student learning, staff instruction and families.

7/23/2020: PHMDC Update

- Dane County still seeing a slight decrease in cases which is a positive local shift; the state of Wisconsin is seeing an increase.
- On DHS’ state activity level tracker, Dane County is still in the high burden activity level (this is the highest level)
- **Based on weekly webinars with DHS, if there is a case in the classroom, DHS has communicated that everyone in the classroom would likely need to quarantine. If there is a student in 4 different classrooms, likely all four classrooms would need to quarantine. Which means in this scenario 80+ people may need to quarantine for one positive case.**
- When will school metrics be available?
 - This is a priority. Meeting with data team and epis multiple times a week, reviewing emerging metrics alongside local data, and continue to implement measures that will decrease COVID spread in Dane County to create a safer environment for schools to open in.

7/27/2020: School Board Meeting (can be viewed on wdee.org)

- [Back-to-School Plan Update](#) discussion begins at 19:40 until 1:45:30 on the recording
- Board votes in favor of a virtual start for the school year with a gradual reopening as Dane County data data and metrics and PHMDC guidance allows.

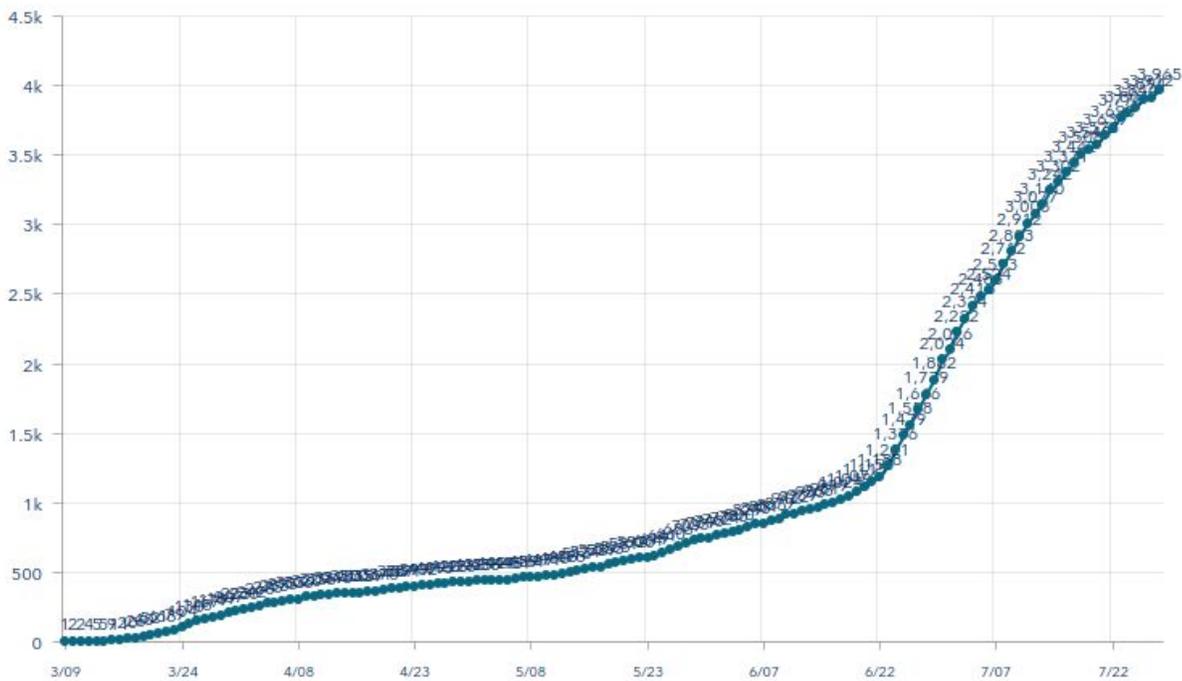
7/27/2020: Family Update from School District

- Family Communication letter emailed to all families
- [Back-to-School Plan Update](#) link shared in the email letter

7/28/2020: PHMDC Update

- In the new data snapshot (most recent 14-day period) the average number of cases per day has decreased, but are still experiencing high numbers of cases per day. Cases per day ranged from 30 to 102, with an average of 63 cases per day, down from 80 in the last snapshot.
- Seeing greater community spread in Dane County. The community spread metric has turned red this snapshot—36% of people with COVID-19 did not know where they could have been exposed, compared to 30% from last week's snapshot. A high percent of cases with no known route of disease transmission means there is likely a large number of individuals unknowingly spreading the virus in the community, which makes isolation and contact tracing much more difficult. The fact that community spread has increased even as the number of cases has decreased is somewhat concerning and is a data point that will be watched in the coming weeks.
- Developing local school reopening metrics is our top priority, alongside thinking through metrics and criteria around what would cause schools to be shut down, continue to work closely with operations and data team on this. Found out that DHS is in the process of creating school metric recommendations for the state. Trying to coordinate with DHS but are mindful of local school reopening timelines and hope to provide these metrics as quickly as possible.
- Back to school events for parents/caregivers are limited to mass gathering rules of 10 inside and 25 outside. These numbers do not include staff members.
- Starting to see increased research that supports bringing back elementary students back before middle and high school.

Cumulative Case Count by Date of Test Result



*The first case in Dane County occurred on 2/5/2020. Recent dates are subject to change as results continue to come in.

New Cases and 7 Day Average of New Cases by Date of Test Result



Note: Cases are assigned to the date of their positive test result. Recent dates are subject to change as results continue to come in.