

FAQs for COVID Response & Return to School w/ Superintendent Jeffrey Zanghi

September 14, 2020

Metrics for Remote/Hybrid/Full in School Learning

Q. What thresholds or metrics will be used to determine when or if the method of education is to be changed? In other words, are you basing it on positive cases in the community, positive cases in the school?

A. *The commissioner has encouraged districts to use multiple weeks of data along with multiple sources to make our decision. On a conference call with DESE, further guidance included consultation with our local BOH. We have said all along that if the positivity rate in our towns goes above 5%, we would pivot to remote. I think the bigger issue will be pivoting to full in.*

Response to Positive Cases

Q. Currently, the recommendations are that anyone with close contact to an individual that has tested positive should quarantine. Close contact is within 6 feet for more than 10-30 minutes depending on the contact. So, if a student even rides a bus, those on the bus and those in the classroom could be considered close contact but not everyone else in the building. Is there any way for administration to determine a more exact contact tracing? Since we are keeping students apart from each other shouldn't we take advantage of this?

A. *We have set the criteria for closing a school at one positive case because contact tracing is going to be difficult. Many of our kids ride the bus and buses don't pick up by grade. So, a student who is positive may have come into contact with students from different grades. More importantly, the teacher comes into contact with students from both cohorts. Again, using scientific guidance, we could isolate a small group of students. The high anxiety levels will make it almost impossible NOT to close the entire school.*

Attendance

Q. Are students expected to be available all day, every day on the remote learning (really homeschooling days)? How will we report doctor's, dentist, orthodontist appointments as excused absences from class? In the case that there is a younger student in the home that cannot be home alone and will miss "class" as well, will excused absences also be given?

A. *Attendance will be taken for each period of the day even when students are remote. If a student has a dentist or doctor's appointment, it will be the parent's responsibility to let the teacher and/or school secretary know.*