



Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities



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Letter of Support for COVID-19 Vaccination to Keep Schools Open May 4, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every single person in Michigan. Our children especially have had to miss out on, or change, the way they enjoy once-in-a-lifetime events. However, we are proud that our schools have offered an in-person education option this year, most with few interruptions, while other areas in the state and country have debated if it is possible.

Schools and local health departments know school closure negatively impacts our children's physical, mental, and educational development, as well as their overall wellbeing. To keep our K-12 schools open safely this year, we have devoted large amounts of time and resources to this worthwhile investment. We will continue to do what is best to keep children in school, which includes following safety measures and encouraging the community to get vaccinated for COVID-19.

There has been a great deal of scientific study on school safety and COVID-19. These studies consistently tell us that the risk of COVID-19 spreading in schools that follow proper infection control - like wearing masks, washing hands, keeping people spaced apart, among others - is very low. The studies also tell us that most of the cases of COVID-19 in students and staff at schools are due to community transmission, meaning COVID-19 came from outside of the school; this is what we have seen in our school systems as well. Unfortunately, when a student or staff members does become infected with COVID-19 in the community and comes to school, they can expose many people in the school and on occasion, infect other people at school. When large numbers of people are exposed, or if COVID-19 starts spreading in the school, often the only option is to close the school for up to two weeks. We know this is a hardship on our students and families.

The best way to keep our schools open is to reduce and prevent COVID-19 in our communities, especially in those people who are around our students and staff. Currently, our best hope of doing that is with vaccination for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. We ask that all those able to get vaccinated for SARS-CoV-2 do so to help keep our schools open. As vaccination becomes available to younger age groups, we encourage you to get your children vaccinated to help end this pandemic and help us have a more traditional school year in the fall. You can find information about vaccination at www.cmdhd.org. The kids in your community are counting on you.

Signed:

Central Michigan District Health Department
AuGres-Sims School District
Standish-Sterling Community Schools
Clare-Gladwin RESD
Farwell Area Schools
Harrison Community Schools
Beal City Public Schools
Mt. Pleasant Public Schools
Saginaw Chippewa Academy
Shepherd Public Schools
St. Joseph the Worker School

White Pine Montessori Children Center
Evert Public Schools
Marion Public Schools
Reed City Area Public School
Houghton Lake Community Schools
Roscommon Area Public Schools

Please visit us at our website www.cmdhd.org