



August 5, 2021

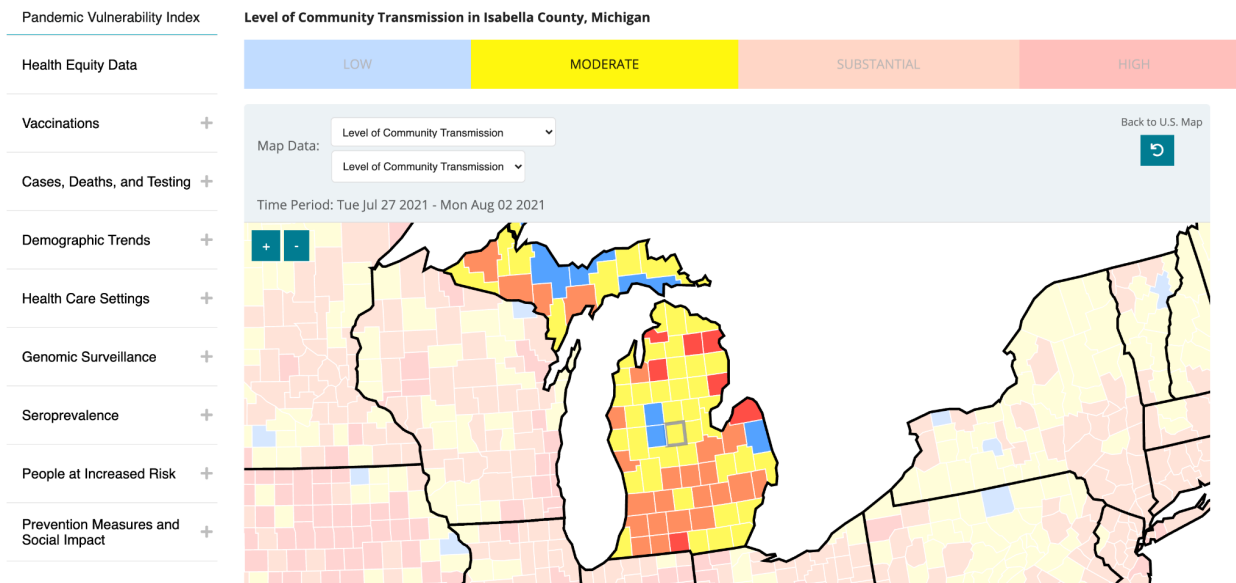
Shepherd Staff and Families,

Hello and welcome to the month of August. As we inch closer and closer to school, we as a district wish to provide you an update on our plans for returning to school Monday, August 23rd, 2021.

As many if not all of you have been informed, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has changed its course a bit since our last message to you shown below. The **ONLY** piece - from the message below - that has changed for sure is; ***Masks must be worn on school buses.***

Other than the aspect of masking on buses, Shepherd Public Schools will continue with our Back to School Plans as are outlined below.

Please know that preliminary discussions with what I will call the district's COVID-19 Team (building leaders, local health officials, teacher representation and the Board) have begun. The decision at this point is to take a "wait-and-see" approach. As we all know by now, things can change fairly quickly in the spectrum of COVID-19. What we decide this week could be completely different than what we decide - based on watching specific data - next week. One particular piece of data our COVID-19 team is watching is shown in the following pictograph.



As you can see from this picture (Isabella County has a gray border) our county currently is shown to have a "moderate" rate of transmission. Each week this pictograph or data point is updated. Our COVID-19 team has decided this is a "key" piece of information we must pay

attention to. Here is the link the pictograph was taken from. [back to school 21-22 July full PPT.pdf](#) For example, our decisions - based on these color schemes may be:

County **Yellow**

County **Orange**

County **Red**

Cases Reported to HD
Mask on Buses
Optional Masks All Buildings
Contact Tracing
Parent Quarantine Option
Social Distance Focus
Buildings Open to Public

Cases Reported to HD
Mask on Buses
Optional Masks All Buildings
Contact Tracing
Parent Quarantine Option
Social Distance Focus
Buildings Open to Public

Cases Reported to HD
Mask on Buses
Mask Mandate Possible
Contact Tracing
Quarantine Mandate Possible
Social Distance Focus
Public Accessibility
Restrictions Possible.

The next meeting of the Board of Education will be Tuesday, August 17th. We are set to meet at 7:00 p.m. in the middle/high school Media Center.

Prior to and including this meeting, the Board and I welcome your input. We certainly realize there will be no way possible to make every individual associated with our fine school district happy. What we as a COVID-19 team aim to do is use real data and health official's counsel to make and keep our SPS family as safe as possible in our decision-making.

Thank you for your attention to this message and please let me know if you have any questions. In all ways we will remain "Bluejay Strong."

Respectfully,

Terry J. Starr, Superintendent

Back to School Plans for 2021-2022

July 2, 2021

Dear Shepherd Public Schools Families and Staff:

We are so happy to see our local COVID-19 numbers decline and restrictions greatly reduced. We are looking forward to the upcoming school year!

The district has received a number of questions about what “school” will look like for the 2021-2022 school year. This update will provide you with our plans as of today, which may change should we receive public health orders from CDC, MDHHS, and/or ACHD. Athletics will adhere to rules set forth by MDHHS and MHSAA.

General Information (As of June 22, 2021)

What will our instructional model look like?

All students will attend school full-time five days per week following the published school calendar: [Calendar here.](#)

When does school start?

Our first full day of school is on Monday, August 23, 2021.

When are the first “Back to School Shepherd Schools” events?

Shepherd Public Schools is planning a “**Bluejay Bash.**” This event will include outside activities for students, food, music and an opportunity for parents to visit our schools on the main campus. This event will be held **Thursday, August 19, 2021 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 p.m.** on our main school campus.

With regard to Open House/Orientation events, these schools are planning the following:

Shepherd High School Freshmen Welcome

Monday, August 16, 2021 9 am - 12 pm. Lunch will be provided.

The building will be open and we will be available for questions during the Bluejay Bash.

Shepherd Middle School’s Sixth Grade Orientation Day

Friday, August 20, 2021 8:00 am - 11:45 am

Winn Elementary

Thursday, August 19, 2021 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Shepherd Elementary

Thursday, August 19, 2021 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

What is the cost of breakfast and lunch for the 2021-2022 school year?

Breakfast and lunch will be provided free of charge; however, the ala carte items (i.e., a cookie, a bag of chips, a bottle of water, etc.) will have to be purchased.

Will Shepherd Public Schools offer a virtual option for students?

The district will not be offering any type of virtual option. There was not enough demand to make it feasible for the district. If you have questions or wonderings about options that may be available virtually for your child, please call the Central Office at 989-828-5520.

COVID-19 & Communicable Disease Protocols (As of June 22, 2021)**Are face masks required at school?**

Face masks will be optional and provided by parents/guardians.

Will my child be required to get the COVID-19 vaccine in order to attend school?

No. The COVID-19 vaccine is not listed on the School Required Vaccination List. For more information, please see: [School Required Vaccines for Parents by MDHHS](#)

Will you separate students who are vaccinated from students who are unvaccinated?

No. Vaccination status is a personal choice.

Will students be in cohorts in the classroom or on the playground?

No. As of June 22, 2021, MDHHS has discontinued all gathering limits for residential and nonresidential settings.

Will contact tracing continue?

Schools are required to report communicable diseases to their local health department within 24 hours. Positive or probable COVID-19 cases will be reported to the Isabella County Central Michigan District Health Department following our Communicable Disease Board Policy 8450 and Michigan Law Act No. 368 of the Public Acts of 1978. For a complete list of reportable diseases, please see the following document: [2021 Reportable Diseases](#). When there is a positive or probable case within a classroom, an exposure letter or correspondence from the school (Powerschool announcement/email) will be sent home to parent(s) just as we do with other communicable diseases such as chicken pox.

Will Shepherd Public Schools quarantine students?

We will continue to exclude staff and students suspected of having a communicable disease based on public health recommendations per the following authority:

[Michigan's Communicable Disease Rules](#).
[Revised School Code, MCL 380.11a](#).

Will student athletes need to be tested for COVID-19 to participate?

No, MDHHS and MHSAA lifted all requirements for student testing as of June 22, 2021.

Will students continue to be required to wear masks and use hand sanitizer on our buses?

With regard to students riding school buses - masks will be optional and hand sanitizer will continue to be provided as an option for students.

**MDHHS prevention strategies in schools include:
(THESE ARE SUGGESTIONS ONLY.)**

1. Promoting COVID-19 vaccination [for eligible staff and students](#).
2. Correctly and consistently using [well-fitted masks](#) that cover the nose and mouth. CDC recommendations for [when to wear a mask in school settings](#).
3. Social Distancing - [Physical distancing](#), including cohorting children together to reduce potential exposures.
4. COVID-19 Screening, Testing and Contact Tracing
 - Encouraging students and staff to stay home if sick or having [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
 - Encouraging students and staff to get tested for COVID-19 if having [symptoms](#) or if they are not fully vaccinated and are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19.
 - Conducting [screening](#).
 - Implementing [contact tracing](#) and quarantine, collaborating with the local health department.
5. Maintaining Healthy Environments
 - Promoting [handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes](#).
 - Routine [cleaning](#) to help maintain healthy facilities.
 - Avoiding crowded and/or poorly ventilated indoor activities (e.g., engaging in outdoor activities when possible and increasing [ventilation](#) for indoor activities).

Additionally, as a district, we have secured a number of safety protocol measures to increase the health and safety of our children. In our buildings - in all high volume capacity spaces - (for example, offices, media centers, Choir/Band rooms, etc.) there will be air purification portable units. Installed inside our larger ventilation units and systems district-wide will be UltraViolet air purification systems.

Thank you, Bluejay staff and families, for your attention to this message. It is a WONDERFUL THING that we see our world returning to increased normalcy each and every day. It is hoped you are able to relax and enjoy the remainder of this summer in preparation for next year's school year. I look forward to greeting your child(ren) and all our staff when we return in August.

Sincerely,

Terry J. Starr, Superintendent

The vision of the Shepherd Public Schools is to be a leader in K-12 Education. Our students will achieve personal success and become responsible and productive citizens.

[Unsubscribe here.](#)