

Exhibit A

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Karim Baroudi** <kbaroudi@hancockph.com>

Date: Thu, Oct 15, 2020 at 11:10 AM

Subject: Van Buren Schools proposed Hybrid In-Person Learning

To: Brian Blum <bsblum1212@gmail.com>

Cc: Michael Leifheit <mleifheit@vbschools.net>, jsalisbury@vbschools.net <jsalisbury@vbschools.net>, Jim Griffith <jrgriff230@gmail.com>, kthomas@vbschools.net <kthomas@vbschools.net>, mwilliams@vbschools.net <mwilliams@vbschools.net>, Hannah Plumley <hplumley@hancockph.com>, Chad Masters <cmasters@hancockph.com>

Good Morning Brian,

Per our discussion on bringing students for more in-person teaching days, and your capability to expand some of the classrooms while maintaining effective masking, distancing, and disinfecting common areas.

On our weekly meetings and again today, I reiterated that our recommendations of only 2 days of in-person learning was to help alleviate the burden caused by the 6-foot social distancing requirements needed to protect the student population from the spread of the virus and explained how this will affect the spread of the virus in our community. Now, for the smaller districts who can get close to proper distancing or can make modifications to achieve the required 6ft distance, adding more days to their hybrid schedule is acceptable! Please convey to your Board that at this point and until CDC recommendations change, masking and other measures will NOT substitute for social distancing. And in our recommendation to go hybrid was to cut capacity in half and allow for social distancing so schools will have minimal interruptions, and it seems like this is working from a health and safety standpoint as measured by minimal infections uncovered in classroom settings (athletics aside). I perfectly understand that not being in school full time might be affecting kids academically, socially, emotionally, and mentally, to which I am not an expert to advise in this respect. You and your Board are more than capable of striking the right balance given the circumstances. Public Health will support your Board's decision to add more in-person days to the hybrid model, as long as we are being creative in using the space you have district-wide and some other remote options for some families to achieve distancing as discussed.

I recommend doing it in phases, if possible, by adding more days to lower classes (younger kids) first. Since recent studies showed that kids 10 and younger are less likely to spread the virus in the community given that they are less mobile than the 10 or older age group. Having that two-weeks or so as buffer, will give you an idea of what going full time for all will look like, and a chance to adjust your plans.

As far as considering a 2-day hybrid, for when the County move to Red Risk level; We might have to change our original recommendations, depending on what indicators were triggered to put us in red. If the community spread is under control, but we are red because of other factors that is not connected to or will not affect the student population would be a good consideration for that. We are closely monitoring All indicators and as soon we are presented with such conditions, we will reevaluate our recommendations accordingly to avoid disruptions to in-person schooling as much as we can.

I hope this is going to help you clarify some of the discussion points to your Board and families you serve. Public Health is proud of the continued collaboration to better serve our communities and protect our most vulnerable in these tough times. Please convey my regards to your Board members and my respect for their advanced position on Public Health matters.

Thank you, Brian, for your leadership. Please reach out with any other question or a clarification you might need. Stay Safe and Well,

Karim Baroudi, MPH, RS, REHS
Health Commissioner

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