



May 14, 2021

Dear Lakewood Family,

In many ways, it is difficult to believe the end of the school year is upon us. As a result, this is a letter of reflection and anticipation. It's a letter of information and opinion. And, it's a letter of appreciation and congratulations.

Over the school year, I've been frustrated and confused at times by those I look to for information and direction. The Center for Disease Control (CDC), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and Ionia and Barry-Eaton County health departments (ICHHD, BEDHD), issue guidance, recommendations, and orders that at times were inconsistent or outright in conflict with one another. But, having met regularly with local health department officials, I know that behind the faceless acronyms are good people trying their best to keep people safe during what we all hope is a once in a century health crisis.

It's because none of us have experienced something like this that I think I understand why things haven't been as difficult since last August as they are now. I'm not referring to infection rates as those are thankfully coming down once again. Instead, the periods of time with the most uncertainty is that time going into and coming out of the pandemic. Last August was difficult in that we didn't know what school would look like and whether planned safety measures would work once staff and students returned to school buildings. But they did work. Many students that started in remote instruction returned in-person and, though we had quarantine situations throughout the year, the health department identified only one instance of positive transmission occurring from contact in school.

Looking forward, we are (hopefully) coming out of the pandemic, but, like last August, it's unclear as to what that looks like as well. Or, is it? We want it to look like school did pre-Covid, no temperature checks, no masks, ice cream socials, pep assemblies, band and choir concerts, field trips, etc. So, maybe what it looks like isn't unclear, it's how we get there. Here's where I may lose your attention and support.

I recently shared information regarding a health department vaccination clinic opportunity. I won't say I received several responses, but one that I did receive said, "Stop pushing vaccinations, what are you a doctor?" I could have replied, "Why, yes, I am. But, not a medical one, so I get your point." But, as I continue to think about that, I don't think I do get the person's point for I think that if I was a medical doctor, the person still may not accept the science, research, and testing that went into developing the vaccine.

So, let me put it this way, if next year, we don't want student-athletes tested weekly, we want to enjoy a high school musical production, we want the school experience to be "normal" again, we're going to have reach a level of vaccination that allows for this. Therefore, we are going to continue to provide information regarding vaccination opportunities when they become available such as **Tuesday, June 8th from 4:00-7:00 pm at Lakewood High School**. This Barry-Eaton District Health Department vaccination clinic will feature the Pfizer vaccine, which has been unanimously approved (with one abstention) by the CDC Advisory Panel.

The attached flyer contains a registration link.



LAKEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
223 West Broadway
Woodland, Michigan 48897
616.374.8043
www.lakewoodps.org

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If you prefer not to wait until June 8th, Lake Odessa Pharmacy currently has the Pfizer vaccine available now through Wednesday, May 26th. Appointments are preferred (call 877-855-9777 or register at lakeorx.com), but walk-ins are welcome.

I said this would also be a letter of appreciation and congratulations. I would like thank you, the Lakewood Community for making it clear from the very start that you wanted and supported in-person instruction. That clear direction and support made it much easier for myself and school staff throughout this school year. It's also important to recognize and thank the Lakewood Public School Staff. Whether it be administrator, teacher, paraprofessional, support staff, food service, transportation, or custodial staff, the willingness to cover and support one another in the service of students was fantastic. Whatever kind words you shared with me, I share with this team of highly capable and caring adults.

It's the students these highly capable and caring adults are here for and it never ceases to amaze me what great students we have. I have always believed that if we trust our students to do the right thing, they will make us proud. That was certainly the case this school year. I know that our students faced several academic and mental health challenges this year that won't just go away. Your Board of Education knows that too and that's why academic and mental health goals are front and center in the district Strategic Plan adopted this past December and will be an intentional focus of the 21-22 school year planning.

Let me end by congratulating the Class of 2021. Who would have thought when you started kindergarten or even ninth grade that your Lakewood school career would end like this? I know you have missed out on a great deal and for that, I'm sorry. But I want you to know your school and larger community are proud of you, excited for you, and will always welcome you back and support you.

Go Vikings!



Steven C. Skalka, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Lakewood Public Schools

Additional Barry-Eaton District Health Department Vaccination Opportunities:

The Pfizer vaccine will be used at each clinic, parent/guardian must be present for students aged 12-17

May 21st 4:00-7:00 pm
Olivet High School (255 1st St, Olivet)
Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/32P4GQ9> or call
(517) 543-2430

May 22nd 10:00 am – 3:00 pm (disability friendly)
Barry ISD (555 W. Woodland Ave, Hastings)
Registration Link: <http://bit.ly/sensoryclinic> or call
(517) 543-2430

May 22nd 10:00 am – 3:00 pm (disability friendly)
Eaton RESA (1790 E. Packard Highway, Charlotte)
Registration Link: <http://bit.ly/sensoryclinic> or call
(517) 543-2430



COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

When: June 8th, 2021 | 4:00 -7:00 pm

Where: Lakewood High School
7223 Velte Rd, Lake Odessa, MI 48849

How to register: <https://bit.ly/3tLQHp7>
or call (517) 543-2430

*Must be 12+ [Pfizer will be used]

*Parent/Guardian must be present for those 12-17



Barry-Eaton
District
Health
Department

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