



Belding Area
Schools



Ionia Public
Schools



Lakewood
Public Schools



Portland Public
Schools



Saranac
Community
Schools



Rural Schools
Coon · Haynor · N. LeValley

October 21, 2020

RE: Recent Rise in COVID-19 Cases in Community and Implications for Schools

Dear Ionia County School Community:

As the superintendents of Ionia County school districts, we hope this communication finds you well. We wish to acknowledge and thank you for your extraordinary patience during these unprecedented times in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Your understanding has been critical in keeping our schools safe for students and adults alike.

Unfortunately, the collective hard work of schools alone is not sufficient in controlling the community spread of the coronavirus. Public health experts report significant increases in positive cases across our state and region in recent weeks. The Ionia County Health Department has reported a significant local increase in October, with more than 25% of all local cases since March occurring just this month.

Health officials cite that the rise in cases is largely due to a lack of safe practices -- mainly proper social distancing and mask wearing -- in social settings and community gatherings. If local cases continue to trend upwards, County Health Departments warn schools may be forced to implement additional restrictions to prevent continued infections. These restrictions may include cancellation, or other mitigation efforts, of extracurricular activities like athletics, band, choir and drama.

As a worst case scenario, schools may be asked or required to shift to a distance learning instructional model either periodically or for an extended period of time until cases decline. This could be a single or multiple classroom, grade level, building, program, school district or any combination of these mentioned.

These shifts to remote instruction models could happen very rapidly and without advance notice. It is crucial as a parent or guardian you have a plan for child care prepared in advance in anticipation of these scenarios.

Schools are vital in meeting the academic, social, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and families. While we also acknowledge the important role schools serve for our broader community, safety must remain our number priority. We must do everything we can to keep schools safe and open.

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our local communities and to keep our schools open, we ask that all social and community gatherings continue to adhere to safe mitigation protocols. We've worked very hard over the last several months to enable schools the opportunity to open for in-person instruction and extra-curricular activities. We need your help and continued diligence in order to stay in this model. Working together, we can slow the spread of COVID-19.

On behalf of the students and communities we serve, we thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Ethan Eberstein

Ionia ISD Superintendent

Butch Johnson

Belding AS Superintendent

Ronald C. Stinson

Ionia PS Superintendent

David

Lakewood PS Superintendent

John

Portland PS Superintendent

Jason Smith

Saranac CS Superintendent

Eth Eberstein

Ionia County Rural Schools Superintendent
(Coon, Haynor, North LeValley)