



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Raymond L. Crowel, Psy.D.
Director

November 19, 2020

Dear School Leadership:

Montgomery County is experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases. Cases in the County are at heights that we have not previously experienced and the case rate is increasing daily. The risk of COVID-19 spreading in a school is directly related to the level of COVID-19 spread in the community and safety measures in schools. Current data shows that COVID-19 cases attributed to exposure in schools have been low. However, maintaining low levels of in-school transmissions will become more difficult as the cases continue to soar throughout the community, leading to more disruptions in learning.

We have reviewed the data for COVID-19 cases in schools, information on classroom size and age distribution of in-person learning of schools, and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) reopening framework:

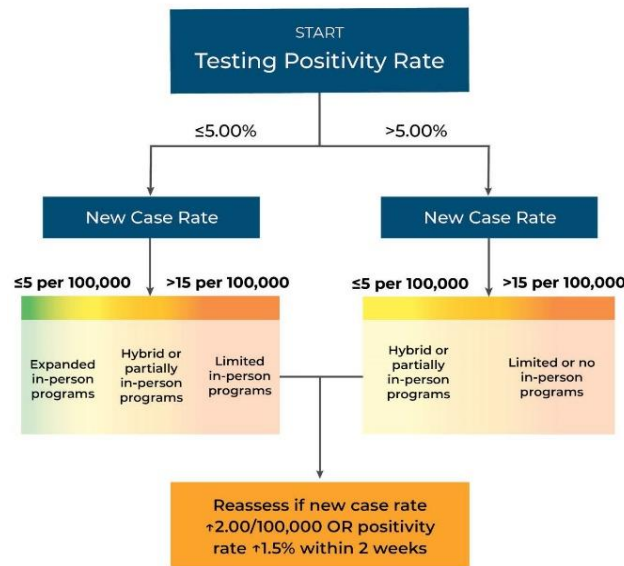


Fig. 1 Reproduced from *COVID-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools* issued by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and MDH (updated November 13, 2020).

As of November 17, the 7-day average case rate in the County is 22.6 cases per 100,000 residents and the 7-day average positivity rate has increased to a rate of 5.4% within the last 2 weeks.

Pursuant to the Guidance issued by the MSDE and the MDH, we strongly encourage all schools in Montgomery County to reassess continued in-person instruction and strongly consider a return to full virtual instruction until such time as the numbers are below 15/100,000.

We ask that you please inform the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) of the current status of your institution. By December 4, 2020, please upload your decisions to return to fully virtual learning, any modifications to in-person instruction, or plans to remain at your current level of in-person instruction to the County's school section in the COVID-19 portal available at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/reopening/letter-of-approval.html>.

We look forward to partnering with you to ensure the healthy development of our children while keeping them and your staff safe during this pandemic.

Sincerely,



Travis A. Gayles, M.D., P.H.D.
Health Officer and Chief

TG:ss

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