

LETTERHEAD

DATE

Dear members of the <DISTRICT> school board and administration:

I am writing to urge you to consider returning to in-person, physical presence instruction for students, per the recently released guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) - *COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry* – available at [AAP.org](https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/), and endorsed and supported by the local Ohio Chapter. It is my professional opinion as a pediatrician that this is what is best for the students. The detailed guidance can be found here: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Utilizing the AAP's guidance, I share in my colleagues' observations that schools are fundamental to child and adolescent overall development and well-being while appreciating the difficult task you all have to undertake to reintegrate children back to school. As you know, schools are not just places of academic educational instruction, but also are critical to the development of social and emotional skills, and provide safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity. Beyond supporting the educational, physical, social and emotional development of children and adolescents, schools play a critical role in addressing racial and social inequity. Many, if not most, of these important roles cannot be filled through remote instruction. This is why I firmly support the return to in-person learning with adherence to the AAP guidelines.

These guidelines are built upon the following principles:

- School policies must be flexible and nimble in responding to new information, and administrators must be willing to refine approaches when specific policies are not working.
- It is critically important to develop strategies that can be revised and adapted depending on the level of viral transmission in the school and throughout the community. This should be executed in close communication with state and/or local public health authorities and should recognize the differences between school districts, including urban, suburban, and rural districts.
- Policies should be practical, feasible, and appropriate for child and adolescent developmental stages.
- Special considerations and accommodations should be made to account for the diversity of youth, especially for our vulnerable populations with the goal of safe return to school. These include those who are medically fragile, live in poverty, have developmental challenges, or have special health care needs or disabilities.
- No child or adolescent should be excluded from school unless required to do so in adherence with local public health mandates or because of unique medical needs. Pediatricians, families, and schools should partner together to collaboratively identify

- and develop accommodations, when needed.
- School policies should be guided by supporting the overall health and well-being of all children, adolescents, their families, and their specific communities. These policies should be consistently communicated in languages other than English, if needed, based on the languages spoken in the community to avoid marginalization of parents/guardians who are of limited English proficiency or do not speak English at all.

As a pediatrician in this community for more than <#> years, many of your students are my patients. I believe it is in the best interest of our community and the families I serve every day to follow the AAP's guidance and return to classrooms this fall. I hope that this guidance and perspective is helpful as you grapple with the decisions in front of you in the coming weeks. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. I would be happy to discuss the AAP's guidance in further detail if needed.

Thank you for your leadership in our community during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

NAME, CREDENTIALS

PRACTICE/HOSPITAL NAME