

**Preamble to the Recommendations
from the Dallas County Public Health and Education 2020-2021 School Year
Ad Hoc Committee**

The return to school presents challenges to families, children, teachers and staff of educational institutions, elected officials and to the various communities in which they live. The issues are multiple, complex and include the safety of: the children, the teachers and staff, the direct and extended families and the population in general. In addition to the importance of the traditional educational processes is the recognition that it is critical for children of all ages to interact and socialize with their peers as part of their growth and development and mental well-being.

A safe return to school will also provide parents relief from in-home educational responsibilities and, most importantly, the opportunity to return to work knowing that their children are safe and in a learning environment.

An important consideration to achieve the latter is the recognition that children who attend a particular school generally reside in the same geographic area; however, the teachers and staff often do not and these factors must be considered in any planning for the safe return to normal classroom activities.

Members of the Committee are knowledgeable about and understand the challenges of COVID-19 testing in Dallas County, particularly for young children; however, we strongly recommend that there are robust efforts to insure the availability of reliable, free or low-cost, rapid turnover (<36 hour results), geographically available and readily accessible testing for families, teachers and school staff. The availability of rapid results testing is a critical tool to insure educational continuity during the period of the epidemic. It is particularly important that COVID-19 testing be available prior to the onset of the fall-winter respiratory season.

With the aforementioned general principles in mind, we make the following recommendations that we believe will provide the safest opportunities for children to return to school.

Members

Dr. Preston Wiles, Chair
Dr. Wendy Chung
Libby Doggett, Ph. D.
Dr. Amanda Evans
Dr. Charles Ginsburg
Pamela Reese-Taylor, RN
Dr. Victoria Shinn

1. Masking Guidance – August 7, 2020 (Attached)
2. Sports and Extra-Curricular Activities – August 7, 2020 (Attached)