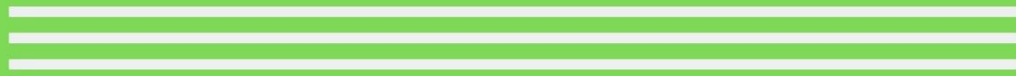




Mayfield City Schools
EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.

RETURN TO LEARN UPDATE



Q & A

HEALTH > SAFETY > RELATIONSHIPS > QUALITY INSTRUCTION

December 20, 2020

Dear Mayfield Community,

It is with great hope and anticipation that we look to rounding the corner in the global COVID-19 pandemic as the first of millions of vaccines have been released this week. Together, all of us have stepped up to continue the mission to educate our students and provide in-person learning with a remote option.

It is my strong belief and that of the Board of Education that providing the option of in-person or remote learning coupled with a strong investment in health and safety measures and protocols is in the best interest of our students, staff and families. While doing so is complex and challenging, our incredible staff makes it happen. This approach provides choices that ultimately balance health and safety with the social and emotional needs of our students. The fact that 68% of our Mayfield families have chosen the in-person learning option for the second semester reinforces the importance of this option.

While there is light at the end of the tunnel, our continued safety practices, protocols and mitigation measures are evermore important.

As we prepare to break for the holidays, I thought it was important to reiterate how we have made some of the decisions regarding the education of our students as well as the health, safety and well being of our Mayfield community in a Q & A format.

Please take a moment to read the following Q & A to better understand our decision-making process.

What are the conditions to offer in person or remote learning?

The decision to offer in-person or remote learning ultimately rests with superintendents and school boards per the direction of the Governor. Neither the Governor, nor the Cuyahoga County Board of Health has ordered school facilities closed to students and the public as they did last spring. We continuously examine the health and trend data provided by local, county and state health authorities as it relates to the health and safety of Mayfield City Schools and the impact on our ability to safely staff in-person learning. As you know, I also speak to physicians and health experts on a weekly basis about our approach to learning as well as the health and safety protocols we have in place.

The decision to offer in-person learning is dependent on staff quarantine trends that specifically impact our ability to staff a classroom, grade level, team, program, school or the district. Every day, we analyze the

COVID-19 data related to our staffing and assess the feasibility and safety to maintain in-person learning and make our decisions accordingly.

The ever changing conditions of this pandemic and the decision to offer in-person learning cannot be solved with a one-size-fits-all formula. My decisions and recommendations to the school board are made on a school-by-school basis. For now, I believe that this approach, while difficult, best serves the needs of our community.

For example, Mayfield High School switched to online remote learning on November 10, 2020. Each week since, we have evaluated and analyzed the trends and tracked cases and quarantines. Because the trends showed there was a negative impact on our staffing, I recommended to the Mayfield Board of Education that we keep Mayfield High School in full remote learning until at least January 11, 2021.

Another example was the decision to shift Millridge Elementary to full, remote learning. On November 30th, Millridge Elementary moved to full, remote learning due to the number of positive COVID-19 cases and quarantines among staff. Millridge Elementary returned to in-person learning with the remote option a week later once the trend data showed we had a decline in quarantines and sufficient staff.

Quarantine and positive case data can be found on our [Mayfield City Schools dashboard](#) which is updated daily Monday through Friday.

What causes a classroom, grade level, team, program, school or the district to move to remote learning?

Mayfield City Schools is committed to keeping our schools open to as many students as safely possible, as outlined in the [2020 Return to Learn Plan](#).

However, the reality of this pandemic is that the local trend data may necessitate a switch to full remote learning for the health and safety of students and staff. There are two independent yet necessary conditions to this decision. First, is the availability of teachers, staff and substitutes in relation to quarantines and/or positive cases. Second, is the evidence demonstrating that in-person learning is causing community spread.

It is the expert consensus of health officials that COVID-19 spreads across our communities because of the actions happening outside of our schools not because of an in-person learning option with a significant commitment to safety protocols. State leaders, health officials, CDC and the CCBH continue to repeat the plea to stay at home and limit gatherings to only household members.

Our challenge throughout this pandemic has been to continue to maintain quality instruction while maintaining in-person learning with a remote option. Our Mayfield teachers and staff have done an extraordinary job adapting to the instructional challenges, while providing many of the services needed to support the social and emotional well-being of our students and families. We are not perfect but we all work hard to maintain the health and safety protocols - including the kids.

When will in-person learning return at Mayfield High School?

The decision to return Mayfield High School to in-person learning with a remote option will be assessed now through the week of January 4th with a decision announced by January 8th. *My hope is that high school students will have the choice to return on January 11.* Please make preparations. As I stated above, critical to this decision will be the availability and health of Mayfield High School teachers, staff and substitutes in relation to quarantines and/or positive cases.

How do we handle the individual accommodations of our staff in regards to COVID-19?

In late March, the United States Congress passed the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) in an effort to support the American worker in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. This Act assisted workers with paid sick leave, paid family medical leave, and other health provisions. Many of Mayfield City Schools employees were eligible for these benefits. Prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year, the District met with many employees individually to investigate a variety of accommodations to allow vulnerable employees the opportunity to continue working this year.

As you may know, pre-existing health conditions may make it difficult for staff to continue working in the classroom, thus reasonable accommodations were explored and, where applicable, those accommodations were provided. With each staff member, the determination of benefits, work accommodations, or extended medical leaves is handled on a case-by-case basis. All of our staff members are unique and so are the many considerations in this pandemic.

For example, a teacher with chronic kidney disease has been told by her doctor that she should not be working with students this year because of her high risk of infection. This teacher, along with a representative from her union, would schedule an appointment with the Director of Human Resources and the Treasurer. The teacher would provide the medical recommendation, but also share how important it is to her to work with students everyday. The next step would be to seek input from the building level administrator. The building principal would then provide information indicating that the grade level where the teacher works has a high number of students choosing a remote option. A plan would be created in collaboration with the teacher, the Mayfield Education Association, and administration that affords the teacher an opportunity to keep her job and work in a (remote) setting that would not jeopardize her health, while allowing our remote students to keep working with their Mayfield teacher.

What impact does the Cuyahoga County Board of Health Stay At Home Advisory have?

From the outset, I have argued against the logic of making educational decisions based on a public health color-coding system not intended to be used by school boards and superintendents to make educational decisions. If I and the school board had committed to the color-coding system, then two-thirds of our families would not have the in-person option. The Governor's and Board of Health's issuance of strong Stay at Home advisories (not orders) come with mixed messages related to schools. The Board of Health strongly recommends schools be on a full, remote learning plan as a default position due to the color-coding system. We have regular, weekly and sometimes, daily contact with the CCBH. They advise us on our plan and provide guidance when staff and students test positive or are exposed. The CCBH has been wonderful in assisting us with contact tracing and quarantines. They believe our Return To Learn plan and our practices are solid and done as well as any. *I will continue to advocate for the in-person learning option as long as we can staff our schools, provide the necessary health and safety protocols and continue to be assured that schools are not responsible for the current conditions of community spread.*

What is contact tracing and is it safe to come to school and work if someone tests positive?

According to the [Centers For Disease Control Contact Tracing](#) is key to slowing the spread of COVID-19. Contact tracing helps protect you, your family, and your community by:

- Letting people know they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and should monitor their health for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Helping people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 get tested.
- Asking people to self-isolate if they have COVID-19 or self-quarantine if they are a close contact.

Mayfield City Schools implements contact tracing with ***each and every*** positive/suspected COVID-19 case that is reported. We work through detailed contact tracing processes with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health to determine high risk contacts. Our adopted practices have mitigated exposure and risk - (mask-wearing, social

distancing, hand hygiene, disinfection and cleaning). Every positive (or presumed positive case) and “close contacts” / contact trace / quarantine at Mayfield City Schools is tracked on our [COVID-19 dashboard](#) (which you can view here), reported to the Cuyahoga County Board of Health within 24 hours and announced to Mayfield teachers, staff, parents and community through text, email and website updates.

Our choices in and out of school play a critical role in our ability to provide the in-person learning option in each of our schools and programs.

What percentage of parents are choosing the in-person option? What are other districts doing across the state?

Mayfield City Schools have contacted parents numerous times to gauge if they want their children learning in person or remotely. As of December 18, 2020, 67.75% of parents are choosing the in-person option for their children. Since the beginning of the school year, Mayfield has provided these flexible options to our families any time they decide to choose remote learning or return to in-person learning. Our teachers and staff have been flexible, accommodating and prepared to best serve the needs of our students. Our data supports the community's commitment that we continue to offer in-person learning with a remote option. In addition, the Ohio Department of Health reports (graph below) that 69.3 % of school districts across Ohio are providing in-person or partial in-person instruction.

Percentage of parents choosing the IN Person option

Timeline:

September 21, 2020

In Person 71.02% Remote 28.98% 1124 students out of 3878

October 30, 2020

In Person 68.01% Remote 31.99% 1237 students out of 3867

December 8, 2020

In Person 66.59% Remote 33.41% 1292 students out of 3878

December 18, 2020

In Person 67.75% Remote 32.25% 1247 students of 3867

Model Type	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Full In-Person	245	40.2%	451,155	29.1%
Partial In-Person	177	29.1%	388,391	25.1%
Full Remote	185	30.4%	691,861	44.7%
Closed	2	0.3%	16,502	1.1%
Total	609	100.0%	1,547,909	100.0%

As of
December 3rd

It's important to point out that this pandemic has wreaked havoc on the economy, both nationally and locally. We are fortunate our Mayfield Board of Education made a commitment at the start of this crisis to keep our teachers, staff and programs whole.

As is the Mayfield Way, we have made accommodations for staff when needed. We have supported our Mayfield Family through these difficult times and will continue to reflect on and improve our practices.

The magnitude of this crisis over the last nine months has caused fear, worry, concern, anger and frustration for all of us. What seemed like insurmountable challenges related to our schools at the start have been met with tremendous effort and thorough planning. We anticipate there will be more challenges to come. Together, we will make it through this.

Have a happy and safe holiday.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith Kelly".

Keith Kelly
Superintendent