



Office of the Superintendent
160 Miller Road
Lebanon, Ohio 45036
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September 2, 2021

Dear Lebanon City Schools Community,

Last year, Lebanon City Schools was seen as a leader in how we prepared for the year, opened school on time, and kept our students in school all year long. We have worked relentlessly to provide our students with a safe and nurturing school environment. Over the past year we have collected and analyzed data, and we recognize the importance of keeping our students in school. In the past few weeks we have seen an increase in the number of students impacted by COVID cases and the resulting quarantines. We hate the burden quarantines put on our students, their families, and our educators.

As a district we continue to be engaged in conversations with other area school leaders and health officials from across the state. We all agree we hate that quarantines socially isolate students from their learning community which negatively impacts students' mental health. Additionally, educators struggle with the disruption to the learning environment as healthy students sit at home during quarantine. Lebanon made the difficult decision to close for three days because we needed to intervene in the increase in positive COVID cases but we also needed to address the loss of instructional time. We had a large number of students out of school and those absences were impacting teaching and learning. We needed to intervene to pause new instruction, to allow students to get back on track, and to begin fresh on September 7th with the majority of our students back in classes. This decision to pause instruction allows us to start fresh, with additional protocols in place to slow the spread of the virus in our buildings, and gives us an opportunity to protect the continuity of our educational programming.

We have permitted our athletic and music programs to continue this week but we have reinstated some of the safety protocols and safeguards we had in place last season. Information on these changes can be found on our website. Please note that we are recommending spectators wear a mask when they are within 6 feet of other individuals. We will pull out all of our indoor bleachers to provide ample seating options in our gymnasiums. Students will be required to wear a facial covering if they are gathered together in indoor student sections.

As we learn to live with COVID-19, we know we need to have better systems for keeping healthy kids in school, and sick kids at home. We have heard your pleas to keep healthy kids at school and sick kids at home. Last week, Warren County Superintendents drafted a letter and sent it to Governor DeWine and Ohio Department of Health officials. Yesterday, we were asked to meet with Dr. Vanderhoff and representatives from ODH to pilot a new multi-tiered, modified quarantine strategy that will utilize a testing protocol at school. The testing protocol will allow district officials to make decisions based on more objective data in order to keep healthy kids at school and sick kids at home.

This change is a direct result of our advocacy work and we are again seen as a leader in Ohio. I am proud of the quick work we have done in Warren County to advocate on behalf of our students and families.

Ohio Department of Health Quarantine Pilot Program

The Governor's Office has released statements regarding this pilot program, but we have yet to receive official documentation from the Ohio Department of Health. At this time, we understand this pilot will allow close contacts to continue to attend school during their quarantine period if they meet two conditions:

1. They wear a mask for 7 days
2. They commit to a testing protocol that includes a test on day 1 and a second test on day 5, 6, or 7.

The goal of this pilot is to keep healthy students in school and to keep sick students at home. We will share more information about the pilot as we receive more guidance and clarity from ODH. We anticipate that these new protocols will be in place beginning on Monday, September 13.

What Stays the Same?

- Lebanon City Schools will continue to require students and staff to wear face masks from September 7 through September 24..
- In alignment with ODH guidelines, students who are wearing face masks and at least 3 feet away or are vaccinated are not subject to quarantine.
- Students who are unvaccinated and not wearing a mask and have been identified as a close contact may quarantine for 10 days at home, or return to school on day 8 with proof of a negative test on day 5, 6, or 7.
 - Students will have the traditional at-home quarantine at home or they can choose the pilot in-school quarantine program that involves masking and testing.

Sincerely,



Isaac W. Seevers
Superintendent