



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Dayton & Montgomery County

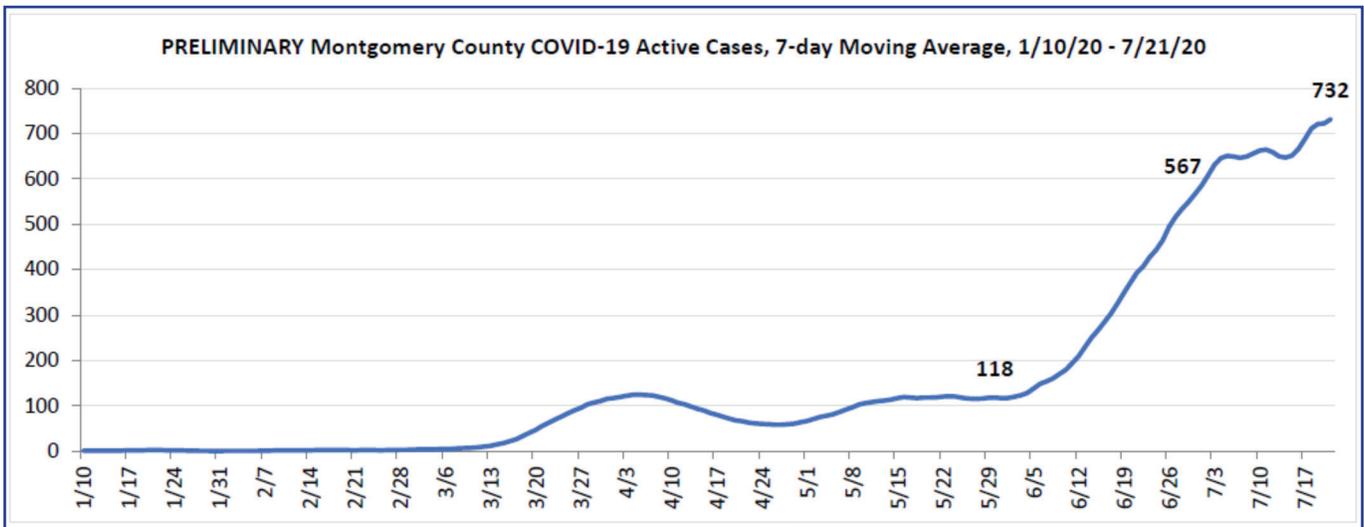
RECOMMENDATIONS ON MONTGOMERY COUNTY K-12 SCHOOLS REOPENING

July 31, 2020



Following the statewide implementation of Responsible RestartOhio, Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County has observed increased community spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19 disease, an increase in infected individuals seeking medical care and outbreaks in businesses and congregate care / living facilities in Montgomery County. Clusters of COVID-19 cases are occurring in workplaces, churches, childcare facilities and social gatherings.

Despite the mandatory sector-specific operating requirements ordered by the Ohio Department of Health, the phased lifting of restrictions has resulted in a surge of new cases due to increased person-to-person transmission.



Public Health has been tracking Montgomery County’s COVID-19 data trends from the beginning of the pandemic and is very concerned about the increased spread of the virus throughout our community. The Ohio Public Health Advisory System has designated Montgomery County at Risk Level 3 indicating *“very high exposure and spread”* of the virus. Indicators currently triggered for Risk Level 3 include new cases per capita, sustained increase in new cases, sustained increase in outpatient visits and more than 60% of cases reported not in a congregate setting, which indicate transmission in the broader community. At Level 3, individuals should *“decrease in-person interactions with others and limit attending gatherings of any number.”*

Further, Montgomery County has the 5th highest number of COVID-19 cases in Ohio and has the highest percentage of cases in the 0-19 years age group compared to Ohio and the other 5 largest counties.



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COVID-19 Cases by County as of July 27, 2020							
Age Group	Montgomery	Cuyahoga	Franklin	Hamilton	Lucas	Summit	Ohio
Cases aged 0-19	418	836	1,705	993	231	238	7,236
0-19 Cases as % of Total	11.7%	7.1%	10.7%	11.6%	5.6%	8.1%	8.5%
Total Cases	3,567	11,788	15,862	8,591	4,146	2,951	85,177

Regarding reopening K-12 schools, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has indicated that *“evidence from schools internationally suggests that school reopenings are safe in communities with low SARS-CoV-2 transmission rates, and that school reopenings may further increase transmission risk in communities where transmission is already high.”* A review of the epidemiology data confirms that Montgomery County is experiencing high sustained community spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

RECOMMENDATIONS



1. **Based on the status of COVID-19 disease transmission within our community, Public Health recommends that Montgomery County K-12 schools begin the 2020 fall academic year in a remote learning environment as the preferred option for students.** This recommendation is intended to best protect the health and safety of students, staff, families and the community.

However, it is ultimately the decision of each district regarding the mode of learning selected, and Public Health supports districts which choose a remote, in-person and/or hybrid option. Districts which choose to offer in-person classroom learning based on exceptional children laws, local community needs and/or family circumstances should follow Public Health’s COVID-19 K-12 School Guidance (enclosed). This guidance incorporates Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Department of Health best-practice recommendations for reopening.



2. **Public Health recommends discontinuing for the 2020 fall academic year high-risk extracurricular activities, including but not limited to; band, choir, theater and contact sports in which social distancing and wearing a face covering are difficult, including but not limited to, such sports as football, soccer and field hockey. We recommend this because these are the two most effective strategies for limiting spread of the virus.**

Public Health understands that these activities are important factors in the development of children. However, the sustained spread of the virus within our community warrants adjustments to best protect the health of our community. By following these recommendations we not only protect the students, but we protect the school staff and student’s family members.

Public Health will continue to track COVID-19 epidemiology data and will provide weekly updates to our K-12 schools to support informed decision-making on appropriate modes of teaching and learning. Public Health will also update our COVID-19 K-12 Schools Guidance as additional best practices are identified.