



DALLAS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ORDER RESCINDING THE JULY 16, 2020, ORDER OF THE LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

ORDER ISSUED: August 10, 2020

WHEREAS, Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins issued a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency on March 12, 2020, due to a novel coronavirus now designated SARS-CoV2 which causes the disease COVID-19;

WHEREAS, Dallas County is reporting record-high numbers of COVID-19 cases as well as record-high numbers of COVID-19 related hospitalizations;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the authority of Rule 97.6(h) of the Texas Administrative Code a health authority is empowered to close any public or private school when necessary to protect the public health;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the authority of Sections 81.082(a) and 121.024 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, and Sections 85.1 (g) and 97.6(h) of the Texas Administrative Code, unless specifically preempted by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the Local Health Authority has supervisory authority and control over the administration of communicable disease control measures within its jurisdiction, to include public or private schools, when in his opinion these measures are necessary to protect the public health;

WHEREAS, recent guidance from the Texas Education Agency and state officials has created confusion about local decisions delaying the reopening of schools; and

WHEREAS, Dallas County Health and Human Services will continue to work collaboratively with local school districts to act in the best interests of our students, teachers, and school staff.

THEREFORE, effective immediately the Local Health Authority Order for Public and Private Schools issued on July 16, 2020, is hereby rescinded.

Dallas County continues to report high number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and other factors. Based on these factors and guidance from the school advisory committee, I am issuing the following recommendations:

1. School systems should not re-open for on-campus, face-to-face instruction until after September 7, 2020.
2. To mitigate these risks to students, in-person organized sporting activities, music, theater, recitals, and choir should not be conducted during times when levels of community transmission of COVID-19 infection are moderate or high using the Red/Orange categories as designated by the Dallas County Public Health Committee.
3. All in-person events and activities, such as clubs, fairs, exhibitions, and academic competitions, should also be delayed during times when levels of community transmission of COVID-19 infection are moderate or high.



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The full recommendations of the school advisory committee related to sports and musical activities are set out in Exhibit A, and I strongly urge schools to continue taking steps to prevent outbreaks from occurring on their campuses. DCHHS will continue to work collaboratively with school districts and offer recommendations based on local data.

Philip Huang, MD, MPH
Local Health Authority City/County of Dallas



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EXHIBIT A

Dallas County Education and Public Health Ad Hoc Committee Statement on Sports and Musical Activities

There are known and yet unknown potential risks of intense physical exercise, playing of musical instruments and singing activities related to COVID-19 infection.

To mitigate these risks to students, in-person organized sporting activities, music, theater, recitals, and choir should not be conducted during times when levels of community transmission of COVID-19 infection are moderate or high using the Red/Orange categories as designated by the Public Health Committee.

By delaying these high-risk transmission activities that occur outside the classroom, there will be a more expedited return of in-classroom learning for all students.

- While COVID-19 infection has had mild symptoms in many children and adolescents, severe manifestations have occurred in otherwise healthy children, including heart failure and death.
- Outbreaks of COVID-19 infection have been reported with both indoor and outdoor intense physical exercise, and shared changing rooms.
- The risks of playing musical instruments in the COVID-19 era are unknown. Practice rooms are small spaces which might easily be filled with aerosol. The techniques of less experienced players may create more risk of aerosol production and subsequent COVID-19 spread. The NFHS recommends engaging with state and local health departments in regards to when students should return for band activities.
- High attack rates of SARS-CoV-2 have been associated with singing and cheering in indoor and outdoor settings.
- Increases in cases and deaths due to COVID-19 may have been linked to large popular sporting events.