



DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NO.2

Alcona County

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Harrisville, MI 48740

Tel: 989-724-6757

Iosco County

420 W. Lake Street

Tawas City, MI 48764

Tel: 989-362-6183

Ogemaw County

630 Progress St.

West Branch, MI 48661

Tel: 989-345-5020

Oscoda County

393 S. Mt. Tom Road

Mio, MI 48647

Tel: 989-826-3970

November 12th, 2020

Dear school communities of Alcona, Iosco, Ogemaw, and Oscoda -

We would like to begin this letter by thanking the individuals and families in our communities for their persistence and patience regarding the ongoing pandemic mitigation strategies. Partnerships between representatives from local groups such as public health, medicine, business, and education have also resulted in a dynamic response to local positive cases. Your hard work is keeping our schools and children safe.

Although we all long for a return to normalcy, safety in our community remains our top priority. Recently there has been an increase of positive COVID-19 cases nationally, statewide, and locally. At the time of writing this letter, three of our counties (Iosco, Ogemaw, and Oscoda) are in the highest risk category for COVID-19 community transmission and the other county (Alcona) is experiencing noticeable surges into higher risk categories as well. We urge families to stay the course and continue to do their part by following the safety guidance from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The best steps for everyone to stay safe remains **wearing a face mask** while in public, **social distancing** as much as possible, and following proper hygiene practices such as **frequent handwashing** and **avoiding face touching**. Following these actions will be critical to keeping businesses open and ensuring that local schools remain open with face-to-face instruction.

With the holiday season approaching it is important that our communities remain alert. Health officials strongly recommend modifying holiday plans to reduce the spread of illness, which includes **limiting travel**, ensuring that **holiday gatherings remain small**, and adhering to **updated guidance** from MDHHS and the CDC:

- [MDHHS Celebrating the Holidays During COVID-19](#)
- [MDHHS Tips on Traveling During the Holiday Season](#)
- [CDC Know Your Travel Risk](#)
- [CDC Know When to Delay Your Travel to Avoid Spreading COVID-19](#)

Local schools are working closely in partnership with public health to plan and prepare for keeping students and staff safe, up to and including a full transition to a virtual learning environment if necessary. Currently the best way to ensure children stay in schools is to minimize gatherings and

follow the prevention guidance of wearing our masks, keeping our distance, and washing our hands.

Thank you again for your commitment to our students and our community. We can take control of the spread of COVID-19 if we all continue to work together.

Have a safe and happy holiday season,

Denise Bryan, Administrative Health Officer at District Health Department No. 2
and Dr. Mark Hamed, Medical Director at District Health Department No. 2

with our local school community partners:

Dennis Friske, Emmanuel Lutheran School Principal

Bill Lake, Fairview Area Schools Superintendent and K-12 Principal

Robert Colby, Hale Area Schools Superintendent

Dana McGrew, Iosco Regional Education Service Agency Superintendent

Paul Ciske, Mio AuSable Schools Superintendent

Scott Moore, Oscoda Area Schools Superintendent

Penny Clemens, St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School Principal

John Klinger, Tawas Area Schools Superintendent

Phil Mikulski, West Branch Rose City Area Schools Superintendent

Joseph Perrera, Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools Superintendent