





Prince William  
Health District

# Prince William Health District

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July 12, 2020

Dr. Steve L. Waltz  
Superintendent of Schools  
Prince William County  
14715 Bristow Rd  
Manassas, VA 20112

Dear Dr. Waltz,

At your staff's request, I am attaching to this letter, my review of the Prince William County School's Health Plan for Reopening Phase Three Draft. Mitigating the risks associated with COVID-19 for in-school programs, and balancing that with the consequences of keeping students out of school is a challenging task. Although I feel social distancing six feet is one of the most important ways to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19, I understand in order to follow the Prince William County Reopening Plan Phase Three, this may not always be possible.

On 7/10/2020, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a follow up statement yesterday available at: <https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2020/pediatricians-educators-and-superintendents-urge-a-safe-return-to-school-this-fall/> about safe return to school (in conjunction with the AFT and NEA).

Part of it states:

*"Returning to school is important for the healthy development and well-being of children, but we must pursue re-opening in a way that is safe for all students, teachers and staff. Science should drive decision-making on safely reopening schools. Public health agencies must make recommendations based on evidence, not politics. We should leave it to health experts to tell us when the time is best to open up school buildings, and listen to educators and administrators to shape how we do it."*

*"Local school leaders, public health experts, educators and parents must be at the center of decisions about how and when to reopen schools, taking into account the spread of COVID-19 in their communities and the capacities of school districts to adapt safety protocols to make in-person learning safe and feasible. For instance, schools in areas with high levels of COVID-19 community spread should not be compelled to reopen against the judgment of local experts. A one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate for return to school decisions."*

Due to the difficulty in documenting my comments clearly, I have attached the document with my comments included. Again, I have reviewed the plan solely for consistency with the CDC's, VDH, and Virginia Association of School Nurses COVID-19 mitigation recommendations. My comments are attached. Decisions on how to implement these guidelines are the responsibility of the school division. If the division decides to significantly deviate from the recommended health mitigation strategies, the "Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools" requires notification of VDOE.

The Prince William Health District will continue to collaborate with Prince William County Public Schools health services staff to ensure the health and wellness of all students, staff and the community.

Sincerely,



Alison Ansher, MD, MPH  
Health Director  
Prince William Health District

