

SCHOOL REOPENING- COVID-19

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Beecher Road School Medical Advisor

- ▶ Family of educators
- ▶ Parent of 4 young men and students
- ▶ School health advisor
- ▶ Advocate for child safety
- ▶ Pediatrician trained in pediatric disability and complex chronic health issues.
- ▶ Goal is to maximize health and well being of children and families.

BACKGROUND

- ▶ Focus is only on Beecher for tonight's purposes
- ▶ Risks, data and concerns are different in older children of middle and high school age.
- ▶ I am only focusing on what we have available at Beecher, not other elementary education schools in other school systems.

BEECHER ROAD SCHOOL

- ▶-Economic impacts
- ▶Family Stress
- ▶Juggling jobs, kids, finances and becoming teachers to our children
- ▶Mental health concerns
- ▶Pandemic has highlighted the injustices in this country as a whole.

COVID 19 AND FAMILIES

- ▶ Vaccine is likely many months to a year or two away
- ▶ Children will be the last to get the vaccine
- ▶ Small percentage of the US population has been affected to date
- ▶ Need 60-80% of the population to be affected to gain herd immunity

FUTURE OF COVID 19

- ▶ We have many things working in our favor that put us in a better place from the start
- ▶ HVAC is updated and efficient
- ▶ Robust PTO, administration and staff
- ▶ Lots of outdoor space and large indoor spaces if needed
- ▶ Many highly educated motivated parents in the BRS community and a fantastic teaching staff
- ▶ Attendees are in the lowest risk group related to Covid-19 (not no-risk but much lower risk)

BEECHER IS A SPECIAL PLACE

- ▶ Children from 0-12 (Beecher aged children) are lowest risk for contracting, becoming symptomatic, and transmitting virus to others. Supported by many studies
- ▶ 0-12 years old much lower risk of serious illness and hospital care
- ▶ Risk is not zero but we can minimize risk in many ways

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

- ▶ At a minimum opening would require low community rates
- ▶ Multiple layers of mitigation required
- ▶ Space and distance are key factors
- ▶ Spacing between students and spacing between adults
- ▶ Handwashing/hand sanitizer
- ▶ Cohorting—we will need to be creative
- ▶ Masks
- ▶ Changing the structure of the school day
- ▶ Rewarding safe behavior

MINIMIZING RISK

- ▶ Even if we ultimately have to return to distance learning some children will need to have time in school—special needs, therapies, etc.
- ▶ Must ensure equitable learning to the best of our abilities
- ▶ Must recognize where kids are coming from.
- ▶ Mental health and education are equally important

FLEXIBILITY

- ▶ With the privilege of having an open school comes the responsibility of families to do their part to keep everyone as safe as possible
- ▶ Lower threshold for keeping kids and teachers home
- ▶ Longer time at home for quarantine and illnesses
- ▶ Framing positive outlook to children regardless of internal struggle
- ▶ Honesty about exposures and travel

PARENT CONTRACT

- ▶ We must demand federal and state government support schools families and covid
- ▶ Paid sick leave
- ▶ Financial support for schools
- ▶ Robust access to rapid return testing and collaboration with department of health and contact tracing efforts.

ADVOCACY