



September 23, 2020

Susana Cordova,  
Superintendent of Denver Public Schools

Dear Ms. Cordova,

We are writing with an update on COVID-19 in Denver. The number of cases in the past 14 days continues to remain high and in the Red zone (on the DPS Current COVID Conditions in Denver Website). In addition, the average number of cases per day, a second measure on the website, has increased from 40 to 84 over the past week. Therefore, the trend in cases is now also in the Red zone.

Based on our analysis, we see the same factors driving the change in both metrics as described in our letter on September 18, 2020; namely, we can account for the increase in cases as coming primarily from students at universities and colleges in our county. There is no evidence of widespread increase in COVID-19 transmission in Denver beyond these cases. Cases among children of grade-school age have steadily decreased over the past month.

Our Departments are responding vigorously to this increase in COVID transmission. Enhanced Public Health Orders for post-secondary education (colleges and universities) have been published. We are working closely with the administration and students of Denver colleges and universities to assure adequate testing, enhance prevention measures, and assure that Public Health Orders are being followed. With this increased focus on the part of our Departments and the universities and colleges, we are hopeful that the current increases in transmission will be controlled within the next two weeks.

While the increase in case rates and 14-day case numbers are concerning, we do not think that it mandates a change in the plans of Denver Public Schools to carefully begin in-person instruction, beginning with young children. Furthermore, there has been no significant change in other key metrics of COVID transmission: the percent of PCR tests that are positive remains well below 5% (currently 3.5%), and there has been no significant change in hospitalizations.

We remain very supportive of DPS' plan for careful, phased re-opening of in-person instruction. We look forward to continuing to work with your team to assure the safety of Denver's children and the DPS staff.

Regards,

Robert McDonald  
Executive Director and Public Health Administrator  
Denver Department of Public Health & Environment

**Bill Burman, MD** | Executive Director | Denver Public Health  
Medical Officer for the City and County of Denver

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