



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
 State Superintendent of Education

December 14, 2020

Alabama
 State Board
 of Education

Governor Kay Ivey
 President

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

Jackie Zeigler
 District I
 Vice President

FROM: Eric G. Mackey *EGM*
 State Superintendent of Education

Tracie West
 District II

RE: Quarantine and Winter Sports Guidance

Stephanie Bell
 District III

As we go into this holiday season and continue to face issues around COVID-19, there are a few items that I would like to address. First, as I mentioned in Friday’s email, we will implement this updated Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) guidance regarding quarantines, effective immediately. On December 10, the ADPH adjusted its quarantine guidance to align with a new option released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) earlier in December. Over the weekend, a few questions have arisen over the advice to continue to wear a mask and maintain six-foot distance after the 10th day, if the person is symptom-free and has returned to school or work. As CDC makes it clear, any person returning from quarantine simply renews safety protocols as are in place for others as well as self-monitoring daily for symptoms.

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
 District IV
 President Pro Tem

Tommy T. Stewart, Ph.D.
 District V

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
 District VI

Questions have also arisen about whether Alabama would move to the “seven-day with testing” protocol. Due to the rapid spread of cases in recent weeks, the ADPH is recommending that preK-12 schools, both public and private, not implement the seven-day protocol. If the COVID-19 positivity rate and hospitalizations drop, then we will ask ADPH to revisit this option as appropriate.

Jeff Newman
 District VII

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
 District VIII

Vaccine distribution should begin this week for health care workers in direct contact with COVID-19 patients. We had a call with ADPH and others on Friday to discuss vaccine distribution. We believe that a vaccine will become available for adults working in schools within a matter of weeks. However, no specific timeline can yet be established. We will advise you as more information becomes available.

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
 Secretary and
 Executive Officer

In regard to athletics, as I have said many times, I am very concerned about the advent of winter sports—mostly due to the large indoor crowds they can attract. Attached you will find a letter from Dr. Scott Harris strongly encouraging that schools limit attendance at winter sports activities to 20% of the gymnasium or facility capacity. I have spoken with Dr. Harris and Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) Executive Director Steve Savarese. Effective immediately, this is to be considered an operational rule for our winter sports programs (implementation must begin no later than Tuesday, December 15, 2020, in order to give you time to notify parents, coaches, and players). The other items outlined in Dr. Harris's letter are also vital to protecting the health of our students and school communities, and I am strongly encouraging you to implement all the items in his letter as strong preventive measures, which will help us provide the most safe, full winter sports program possible for our students.

Finally, many of your schools have adjusted instructional methods and/or school calendars for December and January. I appreciate your letting Dr. Marcus Vandiver mvandiver@alsde.edu know about any instructional delivery changes and Dr. Jeff Langham jangham@alsde.edu know about any requested calendar amendments. I am hoping that you, and the teachers, administrators, nurses, and staff who work for you get some much-needed and well-deserved rest over the holidays. With vaccine distribution beginning imminently, I am in great hopes that the spring of 2021 will be the turning point as we return to more normal operations. Nevertheless, we cannot let our guard down as there is still much work to be done, and COVID-19 numbers continue to rise. We plan to hold a virtual superintendents' meeting on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, 9:30-10:30 a.m. to discuss issues around the spring semester, the upcoming Legislative Session, and other pertinent issues. Please mark your calendars and look for a WebEx invitation to arrive separately.

EGM:LAK

Attachment

FY21-1005



Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.
STATE HEALTH OFFICER

December 11, 2020

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education
Alabama State Department of Education
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Michael McLendon
Executive Director
Alabama Independent School Association
1763 Taliaferro Trail
Montgomery, AL 36117

Steve Savarese
Executive Director
Alabama High School Athletic Association
7325 Halcyon Summit Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117

Dear Dr. Mackey, Mr. McLendon, and Mr. Savarese:

I request your assistance in seeing that the following is shared with your respective schools' superintendents, principals, and athletic directors.

For the benefit of our communities, health care systems, student athletes, and athletics spectators, the Alabama Department of Public Health reiterates the importance of continued compliance with paragraph 11 of the current Safer at Home Order, available at <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/legal/assets/order-adph-cov-gatherings-120920.pdf>, and the Department's "Guidelines for Adult and Youth Athletic Activities," available at <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/assets/cov-sah-athletic-activities.pdf>.

Further, due to the recent sharp increase in prevalence of COVID-19 in Alabama the Department strongly encourages that the following additional measures be implemented:

1. For indoor sports, to help facilitate social distancing, and to reduce the potential exposure to COVID-19 by large numbers of people, the total number of spectators be limited to less than 20% of usual occupancy.

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2. In any sport where there is hand to hand contact, or hand contact with a shared object such as a ball, players and officials sanitize their hands each time they enter and leave the court or area of active play.
3. Hosting schools make a public announcement at the beginning of each game, and during intermissions, reminding all spectators to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and persons not in their household, and to keep their face coverings or masks on at all times while in the athletic venue.
4. For sports tournaments involving multiple teams and games, schedule and organize the events such that mingling of spectators with teams not actively engaged in competition is avoided.
5. Encourage players, their families, and their coaches to refrain from organizing non-sport related social activities which increase the risk for transmission and may jeopardize sport participation.
6. If a sporting event participant or official is diagnosed with COVID-19 within two days after an event, the opposite team and officials be contacted to determine the need for quarantine among individuals in that group.

Additionally, the Department requests our athletic associations encourage and empower sporting event officials to delay the start of an event or suspend competition whenever spectators are not complying with social distancing guidelines or proper wearing of face coverings or masks.

Your assistance with this matter is greatly appreciated. Each of your organizations continue to be a valued partner in our efforts to mitigate COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.
State Health Officer

SH/BH