Mississippi

- There are over 490,000 kids in K-12
- There are 165 school districts
- We have had 1,159 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 citizens (among the highest in USA)
Why is going back to school a priority?

Education
Social Development
Mental Health
Nutrition
Equity
Safety
CYSHCN
Modes of transmission
Source: Journal of Medical Virology

- Contact - fomites
- Droplet - spread thru creation of aerosols on large droplets within 6 feet
- Aerosol (?) - travel long distances on microparticles
- Fecal/oral - found in stool; receptors in GI tract for SARS-CoV2 virus; some patients (esp children) with GI symptoms
  - conjunctiva; has been found in tears.
- Reproductive number ($R_0$) 2.2-3.58
- Other Reproductive #’s:
  - Measles: 12-18 (aerosol)
  - Spanish Flu of 1918: 1.4-2.8 (respiratory droplet)
  - Ebola outbreak of 2014: 1.5-2.9 (bodily fluid)
  - Common Cold: 2-3 (respiratory droplet)
Can it be done Safely? *(the answer seems to be yes)*
The AAP makes a bold statement...

COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry

As schools and states develop plans for students to return to school during the COVID-19 pandemic, the AAP has updated interim guidance to reflect the growing understanding of the virus' impact on children and adolescents.

"COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry" stresses the fundamental role of schools in providing academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, nutrition, physical activity, and mental health therapy.

Schools are critical to addressing racial and social inequity. School closure and virtual educational modalities have had a differential impact at both the individual and population level for diverse racial, ethnic, and vulnerable groups.

A big question parents have right now is how students can go back to school safely during COVID-19. The latest American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advice says children learn best when they are in school. However, returning to school needs careful steps in place to keep students and staff safe.
then this happens.

**Cases are rising again in the US**

Number of daily confirmed coronavirus cases

![Graph showing a rise in cases in the US](source: COVID Tracking Project)
The Response?
“After weighing what we know about kids and coronavirus, the AAP strongly advocates that the goal should be to have students physically present in school. This should happen with careful measures to keep students and staff safe, and with flexibility to adapt as needed to the community’s prevalence of COVID-19.”

Sally Goza, MD FAAP
AAP President
The Mississippi Department of Education has a Plan.
What is involved in the MDE plan?
School Re-opening Guidance:

- Mississippi State Department of Health
- Mississippi Department of Education
- Centers for Disease Control
- Harvard School of Public Health
- American Academy of Pediatrics
How to keep schools safe when reopening:

- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces
- **Wash hands!**
- Desks 3-6 feet apart
- Fewer students and staff in the classroom
- Teachers move classrooms, not students
- Lunches at desks
- Use **outdoor spaces** when possible
- **Masks** for all adults and older students
- Flexibility to go virtual if **virus surges**
Just a selection of topics of interest for YOU:

- Masking - distancing
- Breakfast and Lunch
- Children and teachers/staff with chronic conditions
- Transportation
- Extracurriculars
- Testing
Layering Mitigation Strategies

1. Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread
2. Maintaining Healthy Environments
3. Maintaining Healthy Operations
4. Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Use multiple strategies to more effectively reduce the spread of COVID-19

# Decision-Making Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Lower Risk</th>
<th>Higher Risk</th>
<th>Mitigation Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>&gt; 6 feet</td>
<td>&lt; 6 feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>&lt; 15 minutes</td>
<td>&gt; 15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Size</td>
<td>&gt; 10</td>
<td>&lt; 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Directed</td>
<td>Undirected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Output</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does the event or activity put the broader population at risk*
7 Characteristics of a Situation

- Movement
- Duration
- Proximity
- Group Size
- Respiratory Output
- Touch
- Congestion
Decision-Making Matrix Procedure

**Step 1:** Identify the event or activity you wish to analyze
(Ex: Classrooms, changing classes, meals, choirs, sports practice and/or games, transportation)

**Step 2:** Complete the risk matrix assignment for each risk factor

**Step 3:** Identify if the broader population is at risk vs. individual or small group

**Step 4:** Identify mitigation strategies

Brainstorm as many mitigation strategies as possible in each area. Many ideas can be found on various education websites. General examples:
- **Proximity** - Increase distance; wear cloth face coverings; hold activities outdoors
- **Duration** - Limit duration
- **Group Size** - Break into smaller groups; keep groups cohorted together without intermingling; limit spectators
- **Congestion** - Stagger entry and exit; hold activities outdoors
- **Movement** - Place directional guides in entrances and hallways
- **Touch** - Limit sharing of items; hand hygiene
- **Respiratory Output** - Avoid singing or shouting in activities as possible
  
  **Be innovative and specific.**

**Step 5:** Make a determination if the activity is allowable or requires additional modification

- Is the risk high for >2 elements?
- Are the mitigation steps adequate?
- Is there risk to the entire student body?
- Does the educational value of the activity justify the risk?

**What is the COVID-19 activity locally?**

What would trigger a discontinuation locally (increased community spread, increased cases in school?)

Can we identify affected individuals in case of an outbreak for purposes of contact tracing?
Coronavirus Tests

- PCR testing is sensitive and specific, but not very fast
- Antigen testing is fast and specific but not very sensitive
- Antibody testing is... well never mind.
Guidelines for Individual Cases

PRELIMINARY

- Separate then isolate proven OR suspected cases; deep clean the area per CDC recs
- Return when 14 days past symptom onset or positive test AND 3 days symptom free
- Negative test or ‘physician note’ are NOT required to return
- Close contacts are defined as within 6 feet for 15 minutes or greater.
- Close Contacts: quarantine for 14 days, recommend a test, quarantine even if negative. Monitor for symptoms, further testing not required.
Guidelines for Outbreaks

PRELIMINARY

Outbreaks are defined as ≥3 cases in a group/class/team within 14 days

If an outbreak is suspected the group should be quarantined

Consider building or school closure if there are multiple outbreaks or multiple absences. Closure should be 14 days; extracurriculars discontinued

Discourage social gatherings during school closures
How to Get Help

MSDH Coronavirus Hotline: 877-978-6453
National AAP: discussion board or email
Questions and Comments?
Links to websites referenced in this talk...

- Link to COVID modes of transmission
- Children are not Super Spreaders
- Age dependent effects of Covid Transmission
- Transmission in educational settings
- AAP's bold statement
- AAP News interim Guidance
- Covid resources for parents
- Healthy Children Site - go back to school
- And then this happened...
- Is AAP out of their minds?
- NPR: AAP 'walks back'
- Updated AAP Statement
- Talking points on school reopening, AAP
- MDE reopening plan