



News Release

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State Superintendent Encouraged By MI Safe Return to School Roadmap Plan

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LANSING – “We’re going back to school. It’s a good day,” said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice.

Dr. Rice is encouraged that Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s [MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap](#) provides the right balance of protecting public health and providing public education in our schools.

“We are in the midst of a pandemic. It is a public health crisis. At the same time, we have to educate our children,” Dr. Rice said today. “This roadmap provides us a framework to meet both public health and public education challenges.

“This is a thoughtful set of parameters under which we can return safely and realistically to school in the fall. If we follow our health protocols, both inside school and out, we have the opportunity to stay in school longer next school year than if we assume that the pandemic has run its course. It hasn’t.”

At the same time, Dr. Rice said, “Congress needs to approve additional federal aid so that children’s education is not harmed in a pandemic. This additional federal aid needs to include not simply funding to make up for lost state aid in the pandemic, but also funding to address personal protection equipment (PPE) and catch-up learning in the pandemic.”

To accompany the MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap, the governor signed Executive Order [2020-142](#), which requires Michigan school districts to adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, in which they detail how they will protect students and staff across the various phases of the Michigan Safe Start Plan. The roadmap offers guidelines about the types of safety protocols that will be required or recommended at each phase of the governor’s data-driven MI Safe Start Plan.

The governor’s COVID-19 Task Force on Education provided her with recommendations to develop the roadmap. Dr. Rice and a number of Michigan Department of Education (MDE) staff members are on the task force. At the same time, the governor formed a Return to Learn Advisory Council of Michigan residents to provide suggestions to the task force.

Concurrent with and complementary to the task force's work, Dr. Rice convened three work groups – suburban, urban, and rural – to help inform his work on the task force and to help shape MDE guidance to the 831 local school districts across the state during this challenging 2020-2021 school year.

"I want to thank members of the governor's task force, the governor's advisory council, and our work groups for their work," Dr. Rice said. "Now it is time for more granular work, given the broad health parameters laid out by the governor today."

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