

PUTNAM COUNTY SCHOOLS



SCHOOLS

Columbus Grove

Continental

Fort Jennings

Kalida

Leipsic

Miller City –
New Cleveland

Ottawa-Glandorf

Ottoville

Pandora-Gilboa

Putnam County
Educational Service
Center



June 5, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

To the Honorable Mike DeWine, Governor of Ohio:

We are writing to you today to offer our thoughts regarding the resumption of K-12 education in August. It goes without saying this has been an unprecedented time, a time where far-reaching decisions have been made that attempt to balance public safety with the overall welfare of the citizenry. Throughout this crisis we have all often heard the term “essential”. There has been much debate about who and what can and should be considered essential. After witnessing all the traditional events and memories the Class of 2020 had taken from them through no fault of their own we steadfastly believe that the students’ return to our respective buildings in August is “essential”.

That being said, we also realize the concept of students returning to school in a few months is an issue that possesses a myriad of concerns among the legislature, parents and students across the great state of Ohio. As school administrators we share in those concerns. At the same time, we also strongly feel that the decision on when and how we return to school in August must be left to the local school districts working in conjunction with their local health departments. We respectfully reject the one-size-fits-all approach as it pertains to students safely returning to their respective school buildings.

All Ohio school districts and buildings are different in their capabilities and choices in managing the day-to-day operations in educating kids and – most importantly – keeping them safe. Putnam County schools are different from Allen County schools who are different from Toledo City schools and so on. Invariably, district procedures on things such as bus routes, emergency drills, class exchanges and lunch cycles are handled at the local level. A one-size-fits-all approach for these day-to-day activities would be nonsensical and undoubtedly compromise the educational process. Accordingly, we strongly urge you to work with Ohio legislators to allow local school districts to collaborate with their affiliated health departments in crafting and applying the safety measures that can be tailored to fit each school district’s needs and capabilities for a safe return to school in August.

In the interest of allowable time to adequately collaborate and prepare for students returning in mid-August, we also officially request that the decision to allow students to return to school be made on or about July 1. We are confident in the belief that we can partner with the Putnam County Health Department in that time frame to plan and

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implement the recommended health measures that will allow our schools to safely operate.

In March, you and your administrative team wisely closed schools across the state of Ohio to slow the spread of COVID-19. Intentionally or not, you afforded school districts the trust to innovate and be flexible in continuing to educate students. Despite the drawbacks to distance learning Putnam County Schools rewarded that trust.

Now we are asking for that trust to again be extended. The trust that in collaboration with our local health department and each other we can implement the adequate preventative health measures to bring our kids safely to school, properly educate them and safely return them home at night, all the while preventing the further spread of COVID-19.

Respectfully,


Putnam County School Superintendents


Mr. Nicholas Verhoff
Columbus Grove Local



Mr. Danny Kissell
Continental Local


Mr. Nick Langhals
Jennings Local


Mr. Karl Lammers
Kalida Local



Mr. Greg Williamson
Leipsic Local


Mr. Kerry Johnson
Miller City-New Cleveland Local


Mr. Don Horstman
Ottawa-Glandorf Local


Mr. Scott Mangas
Ottoville Local


Mr. R. Todd Schmutz
Pandora-Gilboa Local


Dr. Jan Osborn
Putnam County ESC