

Legal Update

November 2021

Local Report Cards Released

The 2020-2021 Ohio School Report Cards have been released.

Legislation passed earlier in 2021 acknowledged the obstacles the pandemic presented to education. As such, the report cards for last school year, like the previous year's, do not contain overall grades, individual grades, or ratings for performance measures.

This year, the Ohio School Report Cards also provide information, but not ratings, on graduation rates, Prepared for Success indicators, and demographic and enrollment data, along with other operational details.

Your school's report card and others can be found at:
reportcard.education.ohio.gov



This Edition

Updated Quarantine Guidance
Transportation Complaints

“Mask to Stay” & “Test to Play”

Late last month the Ohio Department of Health released updated school quarantine guidance. Recognizing that out-of-school quarantining has unintended consequences of reducing in-school learning and adding strain on parents, schools, and local health departments, ODH announced new in-school alternatives to at home quarantining for staff and students. The new options are being termed “Mask to Stay” and “Mask to Play” options.

Mask to Stay allows students and staff, regardless of vaccination or masking status, who came in direct contact with someone with COVID in the school environment to remain in the classroom setting if they:

- 1) Wear a mask for 14 days after the date of exposure;
- 2) Monitor for COVID symptoms; and
- 3) Isolate and get tested if they begin to experience symptoms.

Students and staff may discontinue the “mask to stay” procedures after seven days if they don't develop symptoms and they test negative between days 5-7.

Test to Play allows individuals that have had asymptomatic contacts in a school environment to continue to participate in extracurricular activities if they:

- 1) Wear a mask when able (including during transportation to and from games; while in locker rooms; while sitting or standing on the sidelines; and any time the mask will not interfere with breathing, the activity in which they are participating, or create a safety hazard);
- 2) Test on initial exposure notification
- 3) Test again between days 5-7 following exposure. If they are negative at this time, they will test out of quarantine after day 7 and can resume normal activities.

The new ODH guidance continues to encourage vaccination and states that those exposed outside of school activities should continue to follow standard quarantine guidelines.



Having Transportation Trouble?

Many charter schools across the state are having even greater than normal bussing problems this school year. ODE's Office of Field Services and Transportation launched a pilot of a new compliance monitoring system to allow the Office to monitor and reinforce transportation responsibilities as provided under Ohio law. (Full implementation is slated for April 1, 2022.)

Importantly, the new system provides a formal complaint process that can be used by charter schools and parents to report non-compliance. This process will allow for a deeper investigation into

complaints as well as the collection of comprehensive data. If specific evidence exists that a school has been non-compliant over a consistent and prolonged period of time, the Office is required to notify the Office of Budget and School Funding. This could result in the loss of transportation funding to the non-compliant district for the period during which non-compliance was identified.

If your school is experiencing transportation difficulties and your administration believes the school district is not complying with its obligations, they might consider filing a formal complaint.

The complaint form can be found [here](#).

Once the complaint is submitted via email to TransportationCompliance@education.ohio.gov the Office of Field Services and Transportation will confirm the receipt within 3 days and begin to investigate based on the information provided.

A determination of non-compliance will be made within 10 business days from the receipt of the complaint form and all parties will receive a communication in writing of that decision.

Increased Charter School Enrollment

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools recently released a new report looking at school enrollment data across the country during the second year of pandemic-disrupted education.

The Voting with their Feet report shows that hundreds of thousands of families switched to charter schools during the 2020-21 school year, with charter enrollment growing seven percent.

The increase is the largest in half a decade. [The full report is here.](#)

According to the report, charter schools in Ohio realized an 11.1% increase in enrollment between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, while traditional public districts in the state had nearly a 4% decline.

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Q & A

Q: Is it true that Ohio is offering incentives for students to get COVID vaccinations?

A: Yes, on September 23, 2021 Governor DeWine announced the Ohio Vax-2-School Program to encourage students to get vaccinated.

The program which is basically a lottery for scholarships is open to Ohio students aged 12-25 who enter proof of vaccination to win.

Prizes for winning the drawing include:

- 50 scholarships worth \$10,000 each
- 5 scholarships worth \$100,000 each to an Ohio college or university for career or technical education

Any Ohioan age 5 to 11, may also be registered by their legal guardian if a COVID-19 vaccination is authorized for use in this age group by the FDA and administered prior to the registration deadline. As of the time of this publication, the FDA has authorized the Pfizer vaccine.