

NOLA 4 A Safe Return Letter

To: Superintendent Dr. Henderson Lewis and OPSB Members

Tuesday, January 26th, 2021

We are writing with concerns about planning for a return to in person learning in New Orleans Public Schools. We support the decision to return to distance learning on January 4th, and we are watching the data and hoping for numbers that are low enough to return to in person learning. After watching the press conference from January 21st, we have questions and concerns.

We are requesting that the Superintendent and OPSB follow CDC guidance for safe in person learning and provide transparency to the New Orleans Community.

The Superintendent and OPSB must publish a document with the thresholds and indicators that they are using to inform their decisions. Following the January 21st NOLA-PS press conference [the city announced](#) that “NOLA-PS continues to be guided by its [Roadmap to Reopening](#), which successfully led to the return of in-person learning in September.” However, the only reopening indicators in that document pertain to which Phase the city is in. New Orleans is currently in Phase 1, which requires distance learning according to the Roadmap.

It is of the utmost importance that New Orleans follows the CDC guidelines for a safe return to in person learning. Those core indicators are found [here](#). On January 25th, with a 14 day average of 151 new cases daily, our city is more than 2.5 times higher than the CDC’s category of “Highest risk of transmission in schools.”

Community health and safety must be the number one priority. We believe NOLA-PS should maintain the CDC-supported thresholds [released at the start of the 2020-2021 school year](#):

- 1. Fewer than 50 new cases daily over a 14 day average.**
- 2. A community positivity rate of less than 5%.**
- 3. Robust and fast testing capacity.**
- 4. Full distance learning anytime the city is in any version of Phase 1.**

We know that in person learning is essential for our students to learn at their best. We know that in person schooling allows families more ability to go to work and to regain a bit of normalcy. For these reasons we believe that the City of New Orleans should prioritize in person learning by taking all actions necessary to slow the spread of COVID across the city.

However it does not serve families or educators to rush back into buildings while the [city has declared](#) an “active or imminent outbreak.” In fact, returning to in person learning only to then

experience frequent quarantines creates greater instability for families and puts students, families, and educators at risk.

We are eager to return to in person learning when the conditions are less risky according to the CDC. Superintendent Lewis, OPSB Members please commit to following CDC guidance for schools, as you continue to make the decision of virtual or in person learning.

Sincerely,

NOLA 4 A Safe Return Committee, nola4asafereturn@gmail.com

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And the undersigned below, numbering 321

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Hillary Chen, Bay Area Comrade
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I want teachers lives to be respected. I want students and parents lives to be respected. By having kids in school, it will spread COVID through the student body, parents, and teachers. With the vaccine around the corner, waiting for more people to be vaccinated should be the priority before putting students and teachers into dangerous situations. While school can be a safe haven for students away from home issues and etc., we are living in a pandemic and should treat it as such. , New Orleans Community Member
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