



*The following is a joint statement by Marietta/Belpre Health Department, Washington County Health Department, Belpre City School District, Bright Beginnings Preschool, Fort Frye Local School District, Frontier Local School District, Marietta City School District, Ohio Valley Educational Service Center, Warren Local School District, Washington County Career Center, and Wolf Creek Local School District*

The cornerstone to our community is the education that is provided by our local schools. The void created this past spring by the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of all schools was devastating to our students' educational and emotional growth. Knowing this, along with other countless reasons, it is our goal as school and public health officials to safely re-open our school buildings and get kids back into the classroom this fall. It will take all of us to help make this goal a reality.

Collectively, we have been planning and preparing for the safe return of students this fall. Each school district will have a reopening plan built upon the Ohio Department of Health's [Covid-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools](#), the Ohio Department of Education's [Planning Guide for Ohio Schools and Districts](#), and the directives issued by the Governor and Ohio's Director of Health, as well as local requirements from the two Washington County health departments. Each school district will make their individual plan available within the next several weeks.

Each reopening plan will focus on these five health principles: (1) assessing for symptoms, (2) washing and sanitizing hands, (3) cleaning and sanitizing our classrooms and schools, (4) proper social distancing, and (5) when appropriate, face covering policies. While each district's reopening plan will be very similar, there may be small differences that reflect their community's unique needs.

These plans will outline how the health principles will be implemented based on Washington County's Risk Level set by the [Ohio Public Advisor System](#) for COVID-19. Washington County is currently at the second level – Orange Alert Level 2. However, Washington County's designated risk level can change. If our county's risk level would rise to Purple Alert Level 4, schools would close and fully switch to Remote Learning to better protect students' and staff's health.

For this reason, school and public health officials will continue to collaborate, share best practices, and adapt our plans to reflect educational best practices and the current risk conditions in Washington County. Providing in person instruction to all of our students every day is our goal. Community members can help us reach this goal through healthy day-to-day actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, like staying home and getting tested when sick, regularly washing hands, avoiding crowds and confined spaces, and using face coverings while in public.

