

[Return to Headlines](#)

OCS METRICS MONITORING TASK FORCE & NEXT STEPS

As we make plans to return to school on January 25, 2021 under Plan B: Hybrid (in-person and remote with alternating weeks) for families choosing to send their children back to school, we would like to thank the members of the OCS Metrics Monitoring Task Force for their time and commitment over the past few months. The Metrics Monitoring Task Force includes students, parents, staff, and community representatives. The purpose of the Metric Monitoring Task Force is to observe trends in COVID-19 related data and make a recommendation to the Orange County Board of Education on whether to move from Plan C (all remote learning) to Plan B (in-person and remote learning with alternating weeks).

Since September, the district has been making a slow, gradual and safe reopening in Plan B. The district established two Supervised Learning Labs; EC separate settings and Pre-K students are receiving in-person instruction; and, schools are bringing back small groups of students for learning opportunities. While we continue to closely monitor the metrics in collaboration with the Orange County Health Department, effective January 25th, the district will be fully in Plan B. In Plan B, the decisions to close classrooms, schools and/or the district will be made swiftly on a case by case, moment by moment basis, and with protecting the identity of students, families and staff. While student, family, and staff confidentiality will be maintained, we will have a community facing dashboard to keep everyone informed on the status of our schools in Plan B. As a result of all of the above, Dr. Monique Felder, Superintendent, made the recommendation to the Board of Education at their November 9 meeting to pause the OCS Metrics Monitoring Task Force until there's a need for the district to move back to 100% Plan C. Should situations occur that cause the district to return to Plan C (i.e., school buildings closed, fully remote learning), then the Metrics Monitoring Task Force will resume meeting with their original meeting schedule and charge of reviewing the COVID-19 metrics and making a recommendation to the Board of Education regarding when to return to school under Plan B. The Orange County Health Department supports this recommendation.

Per the Orange County Health Department, while the metrics are surging in other places, the metrics in Orange County are good overall. For example, the percent of positive cases has been holding steady at around 3% indicating that we've been able to control community spread; COVID-like illnesses (i.e. flu) are relatively low; and, hospitalizations are not in a critical place. This can all be attributed to the fact that Orange County residents are doing their part by adhering to the 3Ws--wearing a mask, washing hands, and waiting 6 feet apart. Thank you! We encourage all community members to follow the COVID-19 metrics, which is available on the OCS website ([link](#)) and the Orange County Health Department's website ([link](#)).

The safety of our students and staff remains a top priority. We will continue to collaborate on a regular basis with the Orange County Health Department and the scientists and doctors with the ABC Science Collaborative. As a district we dedicate time every day to monitoring the data and ensuring we have the best possible safety protocols in place for our students and staff. The 50 school districts in North Carolina that have been open for in-person learning since August 17th and other districts across the country and



world that have effectively remained open despite increases in their community's metrics are demonstrating what the science is telling us that strict adherence to the 3 Ws is mission critical for keeping schools open. However, please know that should any situation arise that compromises the safety of our students or staff, we will close immediately, whether that be a class, school, or entire district. We did so in March and will not hesitate to do so again if needed. Thank you, again, to the OCS COVID-19 Metrics Monitoring Task Force and the Orange County community for your continued grace and support.

