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**Dave Koch, Director**

To: Iowa Department of Education  
Iowa Department of Public Health

From: Dave Koch, Director  
Johnson County Public Health

Date: August 26, 2020

Re: Support for Remote Learning of the Iowa City Community School District

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On July 17, Governor Reynolds issued a proclamation that requires the Iowa Department of Education (IDE), in consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), to approve the temporary move to primarily remote learning for an entire building or district because of public health conditions.

On July 30, IDE and IDPH released a Return to Learn plan outlining positivity and absenteeism rates as benchmarks to determine various Return to Learn Models. Since this release, Johnson County's 14-day positivity rates have slowly been climbing from single digits to 13.9% as of today. These rates will continue to rise and will rise much more quickly in the next few days as our single day positivity rates are well above 20%, with a one day rate of 27% on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. This quick increase is due to an increase in cases between the age of 18 and 24, representing the return to Iowa City by thousands of college students. I cannot project a date that the positivity rate will exceed 15%, but it will happen and I prefer to be proactive vs. reactive in supporting ICCSD in seeking a waiver to move to on-line learning. I also believe the positivity rates are skewed low in Johnson County, due to the flaw in how positive cases are assigned. We know for certain that many positive cases in the student population are being reported to the county or state of their permanent home address and not their university address. This sends the positive test results to their local health department, as well as being assigned incorrectly on the <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov> site, thus artificially lowering the positivity rates for Johnson County.

Due to the public health nature of this virus and the risk to various systems within Johnson County, Johnson County Public Health writes in support of the Iowa City Community School District request for a waiver to move to 100% remote learning. By granting this waiver, you will be assisting in reducing the likelihood that the virus will find its way into the K-12 population, which in turn will keep the community safer.

Cc: Iowa City Community School District