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STANDING COMMITTEES
INSURANCE
INTERSTATE COOPERATION
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Memorandum

TO: DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
FROM: REPRESENTATIVE VIOLA DAVIS
SUBJECT: CANCELLATION OF IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION
DATE: JANUARY 7, 2021
CC: SUPERINTENDENT CHERYL WATSON-HARRIS

RE: CANCELLATION OF IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

In view of the increased epidemic spread of COVID-19 virus and recent confirmation of a new more transmissible Coronavirus variant this week in California, Colorado, New York, Florida, and Georgia, I write to request that DeKalb County Board of Education reexamine a need for more aggressive action to protect the health and welfare of the staff, students and the public.

As a member of the COVID-19 Subcommittee of the Georgia House Democratic Caucus, I submit this request for a review of a need for closure of the schools for in-person instruction to protect the staff and children. The COVID-19 Subcommittee of the Georgia House Democratic Caucus submitted a request for more aggressive action to Governor Brian Kemp. I am submitting this request to the DeKalb County Board of Education and copying Superintendent

Cheryl Watson-Harris in hope of containing the Coronavirus among our school system for the following reasons:

1. ELEVATED VIRUS LEVEL THAT MATCHED 2020 SHELTER IN PLACE EXECUTIVE ORDER:

- Georgia's positive rate for the Coronavirus on April 3, 2020 when the Shelter in Place was implemented was 19.4.
- Georgia's positive rate at present has reached a critical elevation level of 20.4. This is the reason we requested Governor Brian Kemp review the data and implement a more aggressive action plan such as a Shelter in Place or simply limiting large gatherings in bars/clubs/restaurants, closure of the schools for in-person instruction to protect staff and children, mandate masks, and a moratorium on evictions and cutoff of utilities. The COVID-19 Subcommittee wanted to slow the spread of COVID-19, especially with the introduction of the new more transmissible Coronavirus.

2. ELEVATED CORONAVIRUS IN CHILDREN:

- According to an article written by Yamil Berard with the AJC on January 4, 2021 titled, "COVID-19 can have severe consequences for kids", the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that hospitalization rates are increasing among children and there are new concerns for health and safety of Georgia's children as clinicians see more cases of COVID.
- The rates of infection among Georgia children have more than doubled, with the greatest spike among those ages 10 to 17. In the first two weeks of December, the seven-day average jumped to 432

cases, from 166 cases on Dec. 1 for that age group, state data shows.

- As of Dec. 21, Georgia had a total of 581 children ages 17 and under requiring hospitalization due to the virus, state data shows. Nationwide, according to CDC, about one in three children hospitalized with COVID-19 were admitted to intensive care units — similar to the rate among adults.
- Children with severe COVID-19 can develop serious problems such as diabetic ketoacidosis and intestinal blockage. Weeks after being infected, children also can develop multisystem inflammatory disease, or MIS-C, which causes persistent fever, as well as complications of vital organs, including the heart and lungs.

<https://www.ajc.com/news/investigations/covid-19-can-have-severe-consequences-for-kids-who-need-hospitalization/R6PQCY22DZHLBFAX2FVQHAXRHU/>

- In Georgia according to the Department of Public Health website, the total cases of children from <1-17 years old today is 61,342 with 750 hospitalizations and 8 deaths. However, in June of 2020 there were 1,776 cases, 63 hospitalizations and 1 death.

3. OVERLOAD OF GEORGIA HOSPITAL SYSTEMS:

- The Georgia Hospital Beds and Ventilator use according to ARCGIS.COM on January 5, 2021 stated:
- Inpatient Beds in Use were 13,121 (86.6% of Capacity)
- ICU Beds in Use were 2,679 (90.6 of Capacity)
- Emergency Department (ED) Beds in Use were 2,795 (79.2% of Capacity)
- Adult Ventilators in Use were 1,492 (41.3% of Capacity) -

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/47c1cee4d02542bea35bc3324d6cf5e3>

In closing, we wish for everyone to stay strong, safe, and healthy in the face of the ongoing global health crisis. Our constituents would respect our aggressive actions to slow the spread of the Coronavirus because we value the health and well-being of our students and school staff to be of the utmost importance. As elected officials, we take the safety and security of our community and children very seriously.

I respectfully submit this request for more aggressive action to help slow the spread of the Coronavirus while Georgia agencies speed up the vaccination process. I look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions and/or concerns, I ask that you contact me at 678-349-6835 or via email at viola.davis@house.ga.gov.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Viola Davis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Viola Davis

Georgia House District 87