March 31, 2021

TO: Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee
Senate Education/Higher Education Committee
House Education K-12 Committee
Department of Public Instruction
State Board of Education
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Governor

Re: "The Reopen Our Schools Act of 2021" (S.L. 2021-4)
ABC Science Collaborative, Interim Report

Dear Members,

Enclosed please find the first Interim Analysis of NC Schools Operating in Plan A.

As directed by the legislation, the NC Department of Public Instruction engaged the ABC Science Collaborative (through the Duke Clinical Research Institute) to collate, analyze, and interpret COVID-19 data from middle and high schools in Plan A. We refer to this initiative as the ABCs of North Carolina's Plan A, and we have posted a fact sheet, information about the district reporting process, and other materials at this link for your reference.

The ABC Science Collaborative will submit analysis of aggregate data for all partnering units no later than the last calendar day of March, April, and May of 2021 and final analysis no later than June 30, 2021.

Listing of NC School Districts in Plan A
As of March 29, the NC DHHS has notified the ABC Science Collaborative that 71 school districts and 6 charter schools were operating in Plan A for middle or high school. The charts on the following pages identify these districts and schools and indicate their start date in Plan A; if the district or school has high schools or middle schools in Plan A; the number of schools within the district or charter system; and the number of students in the district or school. Future reports will add information on physical distancing and the number of students per bus seat.

Data Reporting
Also included in this Interim Analysis is a draft template for the reporting of data in subsequent reports due to you. I welcome your feedback on this.

Interpretation of Data
Schools and school systems should prevent within-school transmission. As we have previously shown, when there is COVID in the community, there will be COVID in the schools; however, schools should prevent the acquisition of COVID on school property— "within-school transmission". We have shown that North Carolina schools can prevent within-school transmission; and investigators in other states and other countries have now replicated our work. Based on these studies, we have a reasonable

estimate of the anticipated amount of within school transmission of COVID-19. This anticipated amount of within-school transmission depends on the size of the district and other factors (e.g., the number of students who, for medical or cognitive reasons, cannot mask).

Course Correction

If school districts have higher than anticipated within-school transmission of COVID-19, we will contact the school district directly. We will then take the following steps.

1) We will review school district data with the superintendent to ensure that our understanding of the data is correct and confirm the greater-than-anticipated within-school transmission
2) We will seek to understand why the LEA might have higher rates
3) We will discuss lessons-learned from other districts. Throughout the school year, superintendents in North Carolina have worked peer-to-peer and with ABC to devise protocols related to lunch, extra-curricular activities.
4) We will discuss potential course correction strategies. Throughout the year, superintendents in North Carolina have worked with ABC to form school safety teams and specific action plans to improve mask compliance.
5) We will inform DPI and DHHS of concerning data and (if necessary) course correction plans

Of Note

LEAs are required to submit data every two weeks. The first districts started Plan A on March 22nd. We therefore anticipate receiving our first set of infection data April 5th. We anticipate that our report on April 30th will have infection data, and that we will have preliminary information of the safety of Plan A in North Carolina high schools and middle schools for your consideration.

Regards,

Danny Benjamin, MD PhD

Danny Benjamin, MD MPH PhD
Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics, Duke University
Deputy Director, Duke Clinical Research Institute

NC School Districts in Plan A - March 29, 2021

School District	Start Date for Plan A	HS in Plan A	MS in Plan A	Number of Schools	2020-21 School Year ADM (Month 2)	Distancing	Busing Plan
Alleghany County Schools	3/29/21	Y	Y	4	1293		
Ashe County Schools	3/29/21	Y	Y	6	2813		
Asheboro City Schools	4/6/21	Y	Y	8	4418		
Beaufort County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	14	5887		
Bladen County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	13	3868		
Brunswick County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	19	12060		
Buncombe County Schools	3/21/21	Y	Y	44	22031		
Cabbarus County Schools	4/13/21	Y	Y	39	32668		
Caldwell County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	26	10591		
Camden County Schools	3/29/21	Y	Y	5	1758		
Carteret County Schools	3/29/21	Y	Y	18	7743		
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	175	138884		
Clay County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	3	1172		
Cleveland County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	29	13791		
Columbus County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	17	5162		
Currituck County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	10	4078		
Duplin County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	13	9394		
Elkin City Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	3	1216		
Franklin County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	16	7724		
Gaston County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	55	29318		

School District	Start Date for Plan A	HS in Plan A	MS in Plan A	Number of Schools	2020-21 School Year ADM (Month 2)	Distancing	Busing Plan
Graham County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	3	1062		
Granville County Public Schools	4/19/21	Y	Y	18	6816		
Greene County Schools	4/13/21	Y	Y	3	2700		
Harnett County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	28	19256		
Haywood County Schools	3/23/21	Y	Y	15	6707		
Henderson County Public Schools	3/23/21	Y	Y	23	12927		
Hickory City Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	9	3882		
Hoke County Schools	4/12/21	N	Y	14	8342		
Hyde County Schools	3/15/21	Y	Y	3	514		
Iredell-Statesville Schools	4/7/21	Y	Y	37	20001		
Jackson County Public Schools	4/5/21	Y	Y	9	3517		
Johnston County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	45	35906		
Jones County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	5	950		
Lexington City Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	7	2962		
Lincoln County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	23	11019		
Macon County Schools	4/5/21	Y	Y	11	4300		
Madison County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	7	2139		
McDowell County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	14	5677		
Mitchell County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	7	1738		
Montgomery County Schools	4/1/21	Y	Y	12	3495		
Moore County Schools	3/29/21	Y	Y	24	12363		

School District	Start Date for Plan A	HS in Plan A	MS in Plan A	Number of Schools	2020-21 School Year ADM (Month 2)	Distancing	Busing Plan
Mooresville Graded School District	4/7/21	Y	Y	8	5931		
Mt. Airy City Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	4	1643		
New Hanover County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	42	25952		
Newton-Conover City Schools	4/14/21	Y	Y	7	24368		
Onslow County Schools	4/6/21	Y	Y	36	26864		
Pender County Schools	4/6/21	Y	Y	18	9344		
Perquimans County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	4	1566		
Person County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	11	4258		
Polk County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	7	2068		
Public Schools of Robeson County	4/12/21	N	Y	40	20478		
Randolph County School System	4/6/21	Y	Y	31	15049		
Roanoke Rapids Graded School District	3/29/21	Y	Y	5	2573		
Rutherford County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	18	7308		
Scotland County Schools	4/13/21	Y	Y	12	5273		
Stokes County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	19	5455		
Surry County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	19	7113		
Swain County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	5	1845		
Thomasville City Schools	4/19/21	Y	Y	4	2070		
Transylvania County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	9	3181		
Tyrell County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	3	541		
Union County Public Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	52	39727		

School District	Start Date for Plan A	HS in Plan A	MS in Plan A	Number of Schools	2020-21 School Year ADM (Month 2)	Distancing	Busing Plan
Vance County Schools	4/12/21	N	Y	15	4954		
Wake County Public Schools System	4/5/21	Y	Y	187	157673		
Watauga County Schools	4/12/21	Y	Y	10	4468		
Wayne County Schools	3/29/21	Y	Y	18	17223		
Whiteville City Schools	3/29/21	Y	Y	5	2050		
Wilkes County Schools	3/24/21	Y	Y	22	8469		
Wilson County Schools	3/29/21	Y	Y	26	10315		
Yadkin County Schools	4/6/21	Y	Y	14	4959		
Yancey County Schools	3/22/21	Y	Y	9	1889		
				1494	**906,749**		

NC Charter Schools Participating in Plan A

Charter School	Start Date for Plan A	HS in Plan A	MS in Plan A	Number of Schools	2020-21 School Year ADM (Month 2)	Distancing	Busing Plan
ArtSpace Charter School	4/13/21	-	Y	1	389		
Healthy Start Academy	4/6/21	N	Y	1	412		
Catamount School Western Carolina University	4/5/21	N	Y	1	56		
D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy	4/12/20	-	Y	1	238		
The Franklin School of Innovation, Inc.	4/12/20	Y	Y	1	520		
Voyager Academy	4/12/21	Y	Y	1	1353		
				6	**2,968**		

Template for the reporting of data in future months

Below is the format that will include the latest month's data. These reports will be included in the April, May, and June reports. We welcome your review and feedback on this format.

NC School Schools in Plan A Sample Template							
District ID	**Distance Practice**	**Bus Practice**	**District Size**	**Community Infections**	**Within-school Transmission**	**Transmission Ratio**	**Risk Assessment**
1	None	1	Small	10	0	0	Low
2	3 feet	1	Medium	63	3	21	Low
3	3 feet	2	Medium	15	5	3	High
4	>3 feet	2	Small	107	7	15	Low
5	6 feet	2	Large	150	1	150	Low

Table Definitions

District ID
Districts will be assigned a number in order to deidentify the district name.

Distance Practice
Districts will report on their physical distancing practice:

- None
- Less than 3 feet
- 3 feet
- Greater than or equal to 6 feet

Bus Practice
Districts will report the number of students permitted to share a seat:

- 0 (some seats are left empty on purpose)
- 1
- 2
- 3

District size
Baseline number of individuals attending in-person school:

- Small – < 2500
- Medium – 2500-15000
- Large – > 15000

Community Infections
Community acquired infection brought to school.

Within School Transmission
Infections acquired within the school.

Transmission Ratio
Number of community acquisitions/Number of school acquisitions:

- TR < 10
- TR 10-100
- TR >100

Risk Assessment
High risk is one or more clusters, Transmission Ratio <10, or Substantial number of within-school transmission in schools.