



August 25, 2020

The directors of the Ames Community School District (ACSD) Board of Education value the lives and health of our students, staff, and community. As a university community, Ames has recently welcomed roughly 30,000 students back to our city while we continue navigating the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because of our unique position as a university community, we are concerned that the metrics released by the governor and Iowa Department of Public Health on July 30 will not allow us to make decisions that will keep our students, staff, and community safe. We are also concerned that these metrics do not align with recommendations from the WHO, CDC, or other medical experts. These concerns led us to request that the ACSD develop its own local metrics to assess the safety of our community and determine how we will move between the learning models in our Return to Learn plan.

As a board, we believe the actions of the governor and the Department of Education undermine Iowa's legal tradition of deferring to local school boards for all decisions related to educational programming in their districts. Specifically, Iowa Code Section 274.1 provides that public school districts in Iowa shall have exclusive jurisdiction in all school matters within their district; Iowa Code Section 279.8 provides that local school boards have authority to establish rules for the governance of their districts; and Iowa Code Section 274.3 provides that local school districts' statutory grant of power should be broadly construed.

In our commitment to providing a safe environment for all students and staff, the ACSD Board of Education has directed the superintendent and staff to make recommendations based upon our locally developed metrics. Additionally, the board has directed our attorney to pursue legal action to protect our right to make decisions locally that are in the best interests of our students, staff, and community.

We will be filing a petition for judicial review and seeking clarification from the court.

The Ames Community School District Board of Directors
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