

# COVID-19: An Argument for In-person Learning

Dr. Marvin J. Effa

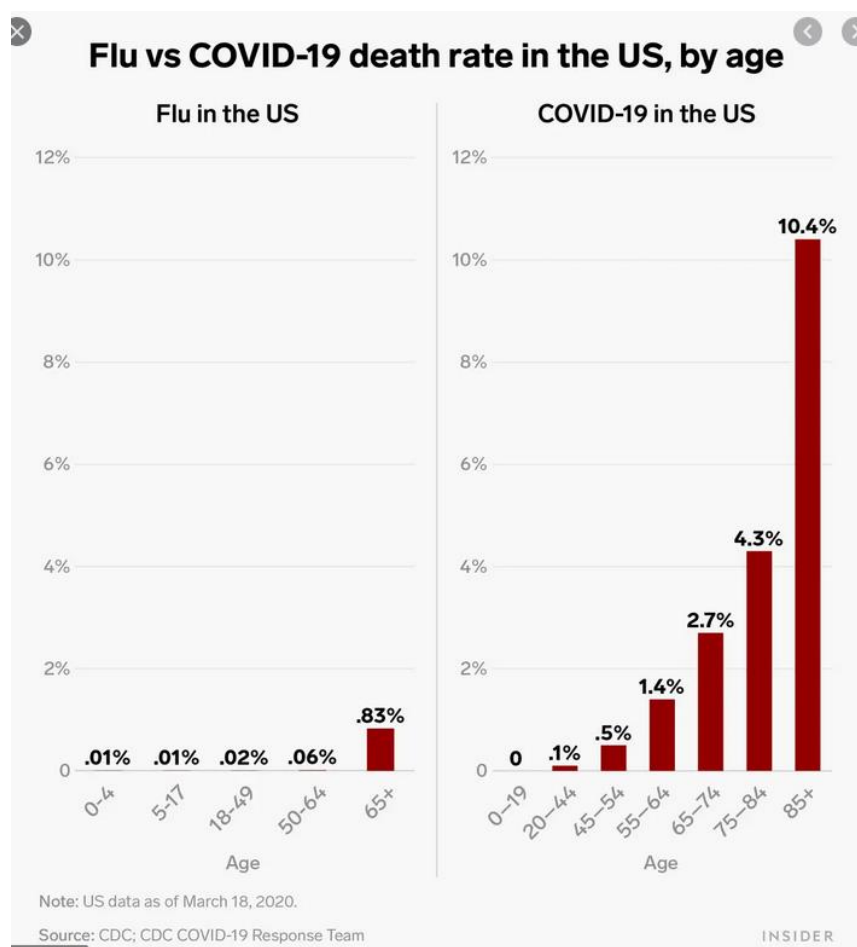
August 3, 2020

We have chosen in-person learning for the following reasons:

## 1. The mortality rate of COVID-19 upon children.

Viruses may be evaluated by the mortality rate and by the ease of transmission. The common cold, for example, is easy to catch, but healthy individuals statistically do not die from the cold. Ebola, on the other hand, is easily transmittable and very deadly. According to the CDC, US deaths from the flu of 2017-2018 were between 61,000 and 79,400 (these numbers are preliminary and may change as data are finalized). According to the CDC, current numbers for COVID-19 are 154,000, but these numbers include probable (unconfirmed) and it is impossible to determine exact numbers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/about-us-cases-deaths.html#accuracy>.

Deaths from COVID-19 among those in the 0-19 age group are statistically insignificant. The following chart compares the flu to COVID-10:



In Texas, and Collin County specifically, we find similar numbers to those provided by the CDC on a national level. As of July 31, 2020, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported that there are 6,569 confirmed fatalities due to COVID-19; of these 9 are in the age range of 1-19. See the following chart of Texas from the Texas Department of State Health Services:

<b>Age of Confirmed Fatalities as of 7/31 at 9:30 AM CST</b>		
<b>Age Groupings</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
<1 year	2	.0%
1-9 years	2	.0%
10-19 years	7	.1%
20-29 years	54	.8%
30-39 years	137	2.1%
40-49 years	362	5.5%
50-59 years	735	11.2%
60-64 years	605	9.2%
65-69 years	747	11.4%
70-74 years	855	13.0%
75-79 years	806	12.3%
80+ years	2257	34.4%
Unknown	0	.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6569</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Demographic data comes from completed case investigations by local and regional health departments received by DSHS.

Completed investigations received by DSHS = 6569

Probable cases are not included in the total case numbers

Collin County has had a total of 71 deaths as of July 31, 2020. Plano has had 20 deaths from COVID-19; all of the deaths have been among people aged 50-80+. As of July 31, 2020, the City of Plano reports the following:

CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES July 31, 2020			
	Total Cases	Recovered Cases	Active Cases
Collin County	6,253 (+86)	4,741 (+40)	1,430 (+35)
Plano <i>Collin &amp; Denton County</i>	1,673 (+28)	1,274 (+11)	379 (+16)
Age	Plano Cases	Deaths (Plano Cases)	
0-19	172		
20-29	364 (+4)		
30-39	277 (+2)		
40-49	293 (+3)		
50-59	266 (+7)	2	
60-69	168 (+4)	5	
70-79	81 (+7)	5	
80+	52 (+1)	8	
Gender (Plano Cases)			
Male	808 (+12)		
Female	811 (+16)		
Unknown	54		
Collin County Hospitalizations			
COVID-19	162 (-6)		
Deaths (Plano Cases)			
Collin County	82 (+1)		
Plano	20		
COVID-19 CASES By Zip Code			
Plano	1,673 Total Cases	Deaths	
75023	222 (+3)	3	
75024	156 (+3)	1	
75025	200 (+2)	1	
75074	486 (+4)	4	

## 2. The emotional health impact upon remote learning platforms.

Anecdotal reports regarding suicide among young people and an increase in drug use are available, but it will be years before reliable statistical information will be available.

## 3. The probability that COVID-19 is being used for political purposes.

Lis Wheeler on OAN, What Teachers Don't Want You to Know About Schools Reopening, July 31, 2020. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPAPA\\_C\\_F0Aw&t=29s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPAPA_C_F0Aw&t=29s)

## 4. The significant superiority of in-person learning.

It is not possible to accurately assess work done on-line. The distance learning protocols make cheating much easier and testing very difficult. During the final quarter of 2019-2020, Bethany Christian was engaged in distance learning and we saw a statistically significant increase in grades. Students who were steadily scoring in the 70s for the first, second, and third quarters were suddenly now scoring in the 90s. Unverifiable and unsupervised learning may work well for doctoral candidates, but in an elementary and secondary format it is inferior to in-person instruction.

## Conclusion

The in-person learning environment produces a higher quality of education. As provided by the governor of Texas and Texas law, Bethany Christian has chosen to begin school on August 24, 2020. The following protocols are currently in place, but may be modified or adjusted as determined by Governor Abbott's directive GA-29.

1. Face coverings will be required by everyone in the building, unless they fall under one of the 10 exception clauses. A face covering is not needed if:
  - a. A person is younger than 10.
  - b. A person has a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering.
  - c. A person is consuming food or drink.
  - d. A person engaging in outdoor physical activity (older students should maintain a safe distance from other students).
  - e. A person is giving a speech to an audience; while teaching, teachers do not need to wear masks.
2. We will practice social distancing; at our current enrollment, we will be able to space the desks.
3. We will practice good personal hygiene.

In addition to the above governmental requirements:

1. Everyone shall enter through the front doors and have their temperatures taken.
2. All desks are to be kept as far apart as possible.
3. All high traffic areas are to be cleaned and disinfected daily, including the desks.
4. Rooms will be fogged with a disinfecting solution once per week.
5. We will follow the CDC guidelines for determining who has a fever and how long they must remain out of school. These guidelines may change, but currently a fever is 100.4 and the length of time away is 24 hours.
6. We will treat all fevers as if they are COVID-19. Should a student test positive for COVID-19 and the results be given to us in a beneficial-to-others fashion, we will notify individuals in that class through our on-line grade book, MySchoolWorx.com, that someone in that class tested positive.

No one can guarantee the safety of your student. As an institution we certainly do not want to put our students at risk. Through a church event in June, our administrative staff were exposed to COVID-19. I tested positive for the virus on June 15, 2020. I had a fever for 2 weeks and lung problems during the first week. My highest fever was 102.8. I waited 3 days after the fever was gone to return to work. My personal experience with this illness: I would rather have this virus than the flu I caught a couple of years ago. I am 66. My grandchildren who were also exposed at the same time as I recovered in a few days. Our experience with the virus may not be normative, but that is what happened to us. It is nice to have our administrative staff done with COVID-19 and free to focus on the education of the rising school year.

Let's look to the Lord for a great school year!

Marvin J. Effa