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**Butler County
General Health District**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Guidance on Homecoming Parades and Dances

BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO – Due to COVID-19, also known as the novel coronavirus, traditional high school homecoming activities should look different from past celebrations.

As part of Ohio’s plan to prevent the spread, morbidity, and mortality of the coronavirus across the state, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has determined that Homecoming parades are not permitted this year. All parades have been required to remain closed since March, during the initial state responses. Carrie Yeager Director of Environmental Health at the Butler County General Health District says, “Parades pose an increased risk for the virus to spread because of the large number of people that typically gather together.”

In addition, ODH will not be permitting Homecoming dances in 2020. However, there are still ways for students to celebrate Homecoming if established guidelines are followed. While dancing at homecoming will not be permissible, events such as catered and seated dinners will be allowed.

“Dances are among the events considered highest in risk due to the limited social distancing options and the increased interpersonal interactions. A dinner event limiting the number of people at one table, minimizing social mingling and serving dinner while seated (no buffets) are steps organizers can take to reduce the risk of the virus spreading,” continues Yeager.

With proper social distancing and mask wearing precautions, schools are allowed by ODH to host homecoming court ceremonies during football games. Public health orders that limit fixed seating capacity within stadiums to 15% will still apply.

When it comes to traditional school rites of passage, COVID-19 has put schools in challenging decision-making situations. School districts across the state are getting creative by adding temporary bleachers or seats to abide by the stadium capacity order and ensure people are safely distanced from others. Other districts are live streaming their homecoming court ceremony for students and family members to watch at home.

In addition to following ODH’s Public Health Orders, keeping all residents safe and healthy is a priority for school districts and public health officials, particularly during this ever-changing time.

“The young people in our community have sacrificed a lot this year,” says Jennifer Bailer Health Commissioner for the Butler County General Health District. “While we want our young people to enjoy their high school experiences, we don’t want to accidentally spread COVID and put the community’s health and safety at risk. Enjoy Homecoming, but do it safely” finishes Bailer.

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