

Identifying Trusted Public Health Information for Your Communications

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026

1:30 – 3:00 pm ET / 10:30 am – 12:00 pm PT

This event will be recorded. The recording of will be available on publichealthcollaborative.org tomorrow.

All attendees are automatically muted upon entry.

Closed Captioning and ASL Interpretation

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Live closed captioning is being provided by AI Media.

ASL interpretation is being provided by Keystone Interpreting Solutions.

Meet Today's Experts



**Meg Carlson, DrPH, MSN, RN,
PPCNP-BC**
Director of Health Services
Indianapolis Public Schools



Erin Fogarty, PhD, MPH, MCHES
Public Health Administrator
Livingston County Health
Department



Megan Barber, PhD
Editor-in-Chief
The Public Good Projects



Jessica Malaty Rivera, MS
Executive Director
Infodemiology Initiative
The Public Good Projects

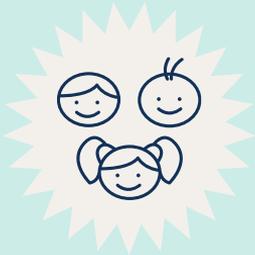
Don't Forget to Use the Chat!

Ask questions in the chat or by using the Q&A function throughout the webinar.



Who We Are

Indianapolis Public Schools



Over **30,000** students



Over **60** schools
incl Charter and
Innovation



One of the largest
districts in Indiana



Employ **>28**
school nurses



65% of students
economically under
resourced backgrounds

A Case of Measles – April 2023

In March of 2023, the country saw an outbreak of measles involving 18 states. In April of that year, Indianapolis had a contagious case confirmed at our Children's Museum and there was another confirmed case in northern Indiana.



What We Needed to Know



What was our level of outbreak risk?



How do we communicate that risk?



How do we gain buy-in and trust?



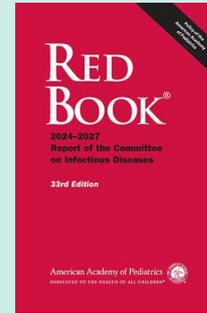
How do we prepare for an outbreak?



Finding the Experts

Determining Accurate Sources of Information

- ✓ Who is well established in community?
- ✓ What are their credentials, training and/or roles?
- ✓ Who are the experts following?
- ✓ Are there long standing local or national organizations?
- ✓ Is there peer reviewed research literature available?
- ✓ Are there known conflicts of interest?

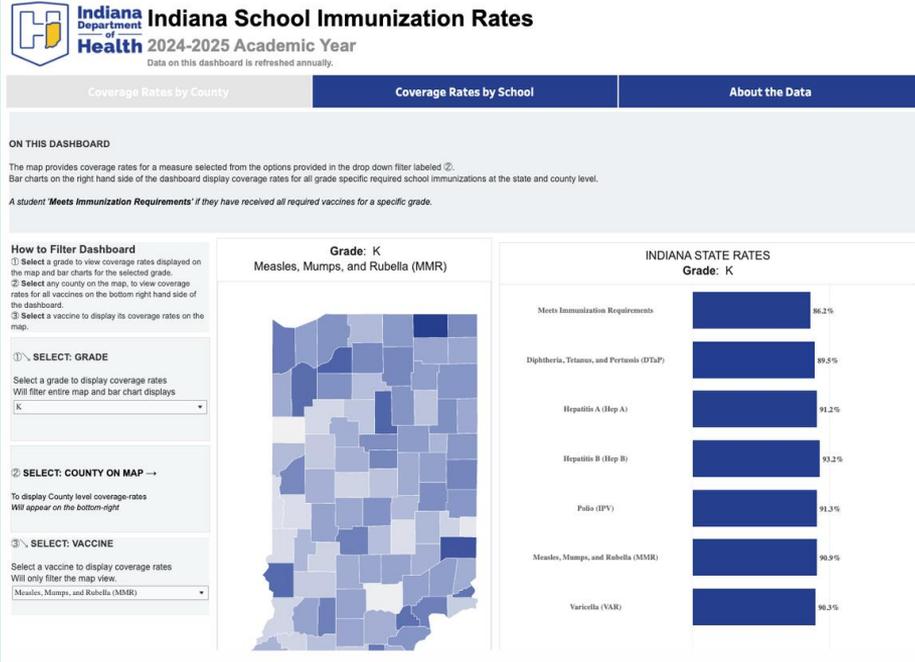


Association of
Immunization
Managers

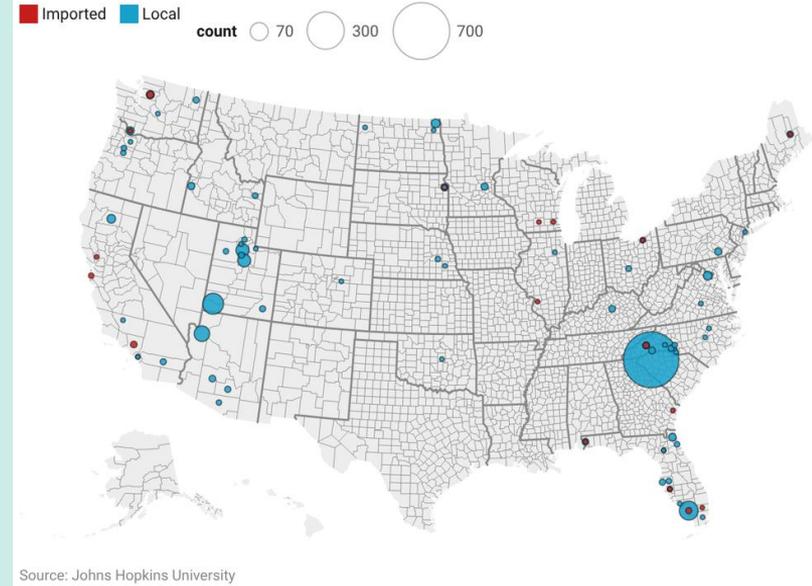


Understanding Level of Risk

Utilizing Surveillance Systems



Measles cases reported in the United States (2026)



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH

**International Vaccine
Access Center**

Understanding Our Data

Local, district, and school level data



How **accurate** is our data?



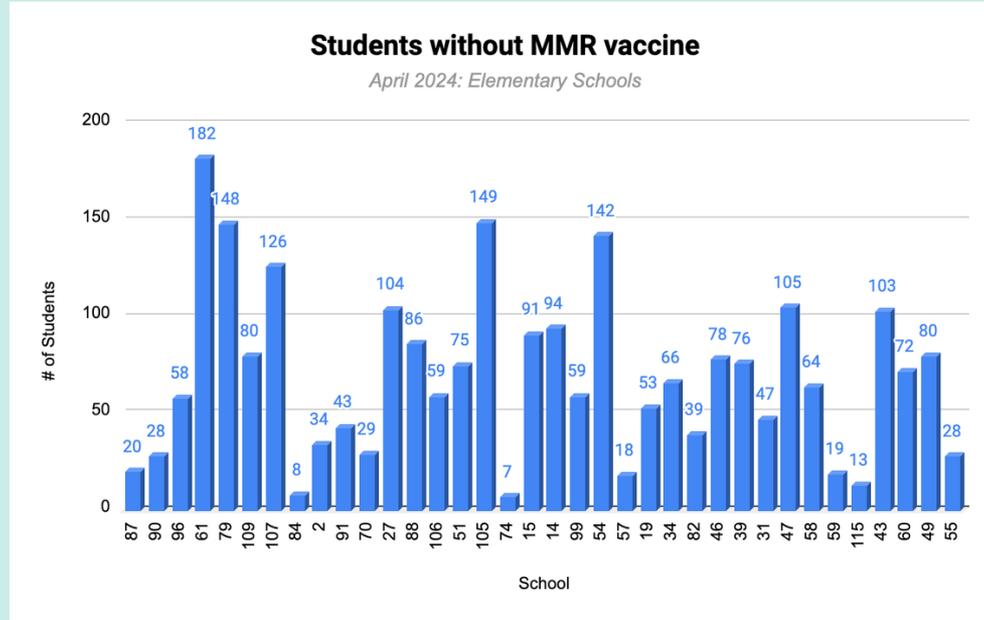
How can we **confirm accuracy**?



How can we **improve accuracy**?

Communicating Level of Risk

Leadership Buy-in



What data do we need to gain buy in?



How can we apply the data to ensure relevance?



Who do we need to present the data to?

Communicating Risk

Parental Communication

- ✓ Schools & school nurses are trusted messengers
- ✓ Used multiple methods, languages and cultural considerations
- ✓ Earned media and social media are your friends!
- ✓ Consistent, relevant messaging is important
- ✓ Be mindful of health literacy levels, avoid sciency language



Outbreak Preparation

Using the data and expertise



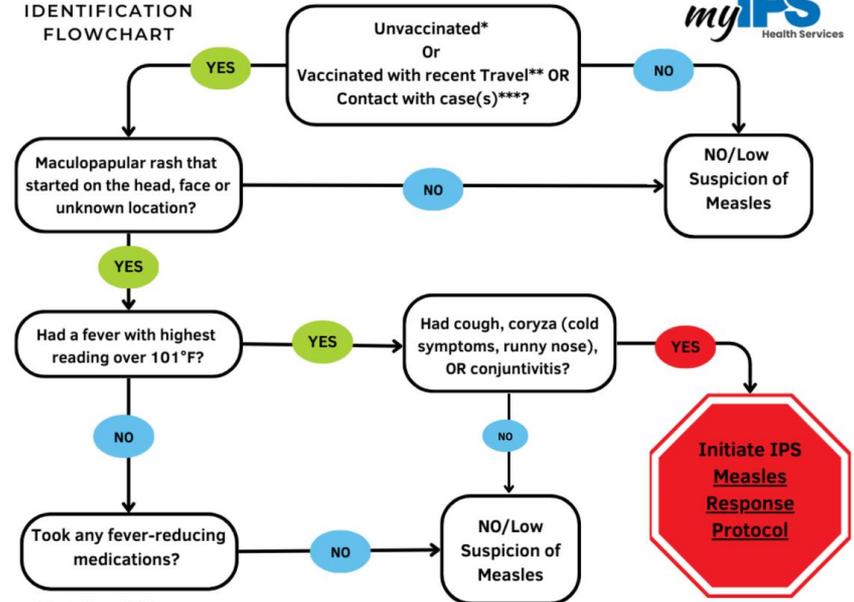
IPS MEASLES OUTBREAK RESPONSE PLAN

Quick Guide*

| PREVENTION <small>(what to do now before an outbreak)</small> | SUSPECTED CASE IDENTIFIED <small>(immediate response)</small> | FOLLOW UP PROCEDURES <small>(immediately following)</small> |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an isolation room in the bldg (must be able to close door and keep empty for 2.5 hrs) Ensure adequate PPE stocked in school (N95 or surgical masks) Identify and track students missing adequate MMR immunity Consider hosting school-based vaccine clinics Send out FAQs to families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately mask and isolate the individual in closed room Notify the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School admin Health Services Parent IDOH/MCPHD Identify how student will be transported home Identify and clear rooms the individual was in less than 2.5 hrs prior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify FMD to clean identified rooms (vacate total of 2.5 hrs) Notify staff of <u>suspected measles outbreak</u> Send out suspected <u>outbreak letter</u> to families Conduct absentee inquiry for students with similar illness Work with health dept to determine quarantine requirements |

*see IPS measles response plan for more details

MEASLES IDENTIFICATION FLOWCHART



Adapted from IDPH

Driving Outcomes



March 2024 to Jan 2026



Operation Immunize IPS

A public health strategy



126 School-based vaccine clinics hosted



84% improvement in district vaccination rates



Achieved >95% completion of MMR vaccine



Became a Vaccines for Children (VFC) provider



Secured over \$250K grant to implement VFC program

Final Thoughts

- ✔ Network and build relationships to stay informed
- ✔ Build your 'street cred' - be visible and advocate
- ✔ Diversify your resources to improve relevance
- ✔ Don't discount unconventional sources, but tread carefully
- ✔ Include quantitative and qualitative data when able
- ✔ Cross check information across various sources
- ✔ Communicate your work, especially the wins!





Erin Fogarty, PhD, MPH, MCHES

Public Health Administrator
Livingston County Health Department
Pontiac, Illinois

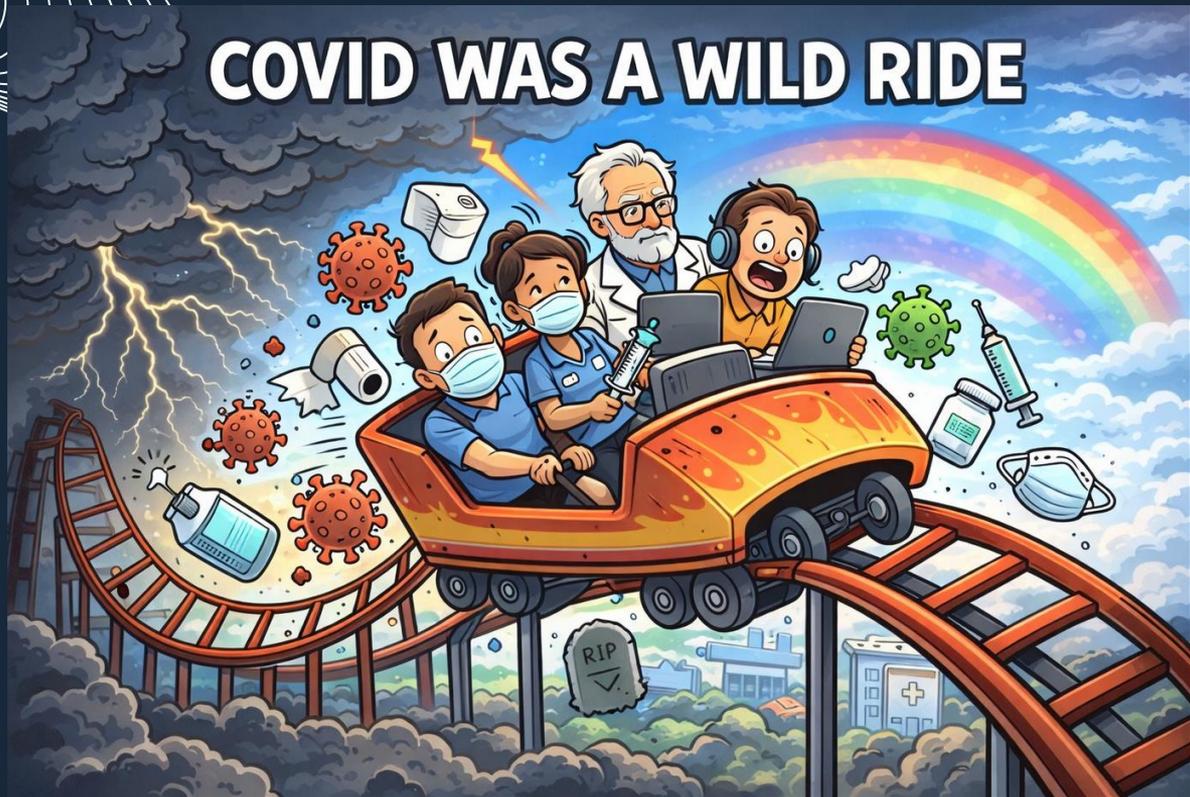


Livingston County, IL

- Under 36,000 residents
- 64.6% lived in rural areas
- 15 towns - 52% of residents live in Pontiac (31%), Dwight (11%), Fairbury (10%)
- Each community is very unique

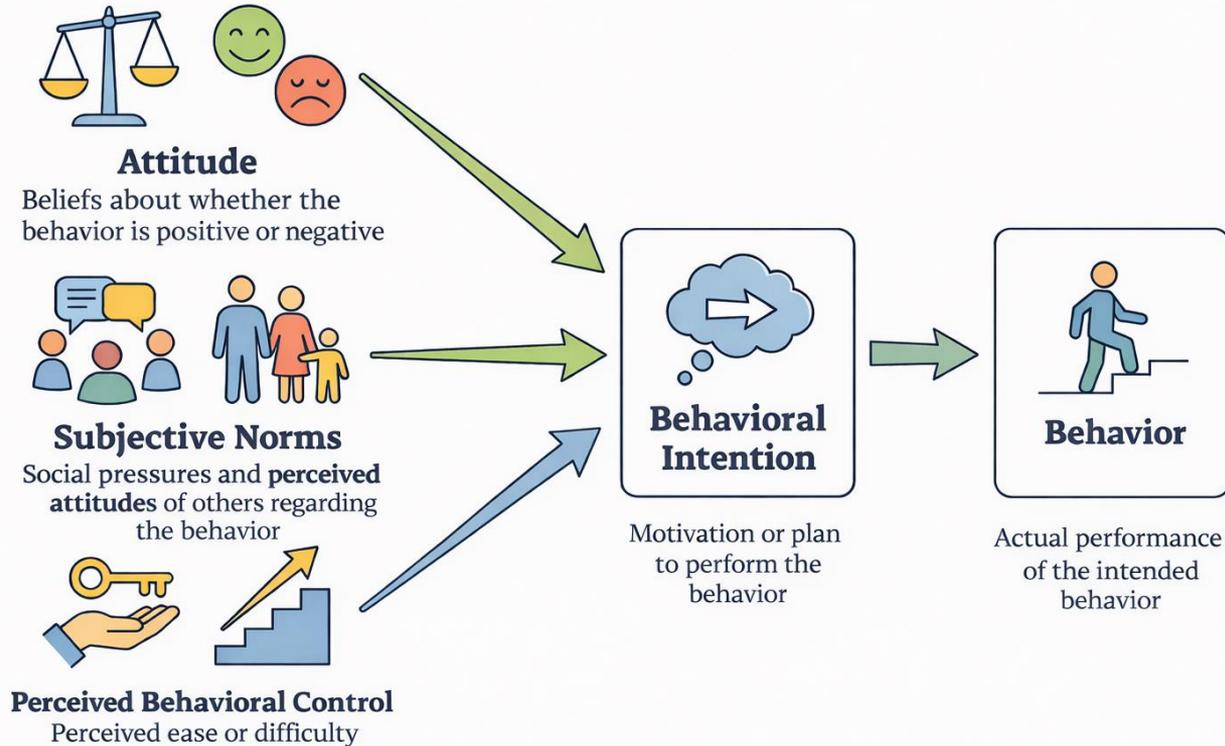


Livingston County, Illinois. (2026). US County Maps.
<https://uscountymaps.com/livingston-county-map-illinois/>



But a great opportunity to learn!

THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR



Effective Messaging

Targeted communication is essential for overcoming misinformation and enhancing community trust in health initiatives.



Strategy: Address Community Concerns

Identify local fears and reduce barriers

Tailor messages to real-life concerns

Highlight practical benefits of vaccination
(Always think WIIFM!)

Use trusted voices in the community *(Local vs State/Federal)*

Unified, consistent messaging



Key Takeaways for Future Emergencies

Know your community/audience

Be evidence-based in your approach

Make the desired behavior the “easy” choice

The messenger matters just as much as the message

Unified, consistent communication networks save lives

Trust must be built before crises occur

We Want to Hear From You!

Share your feedback on today's webinar:



Thank You!

More Resources

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