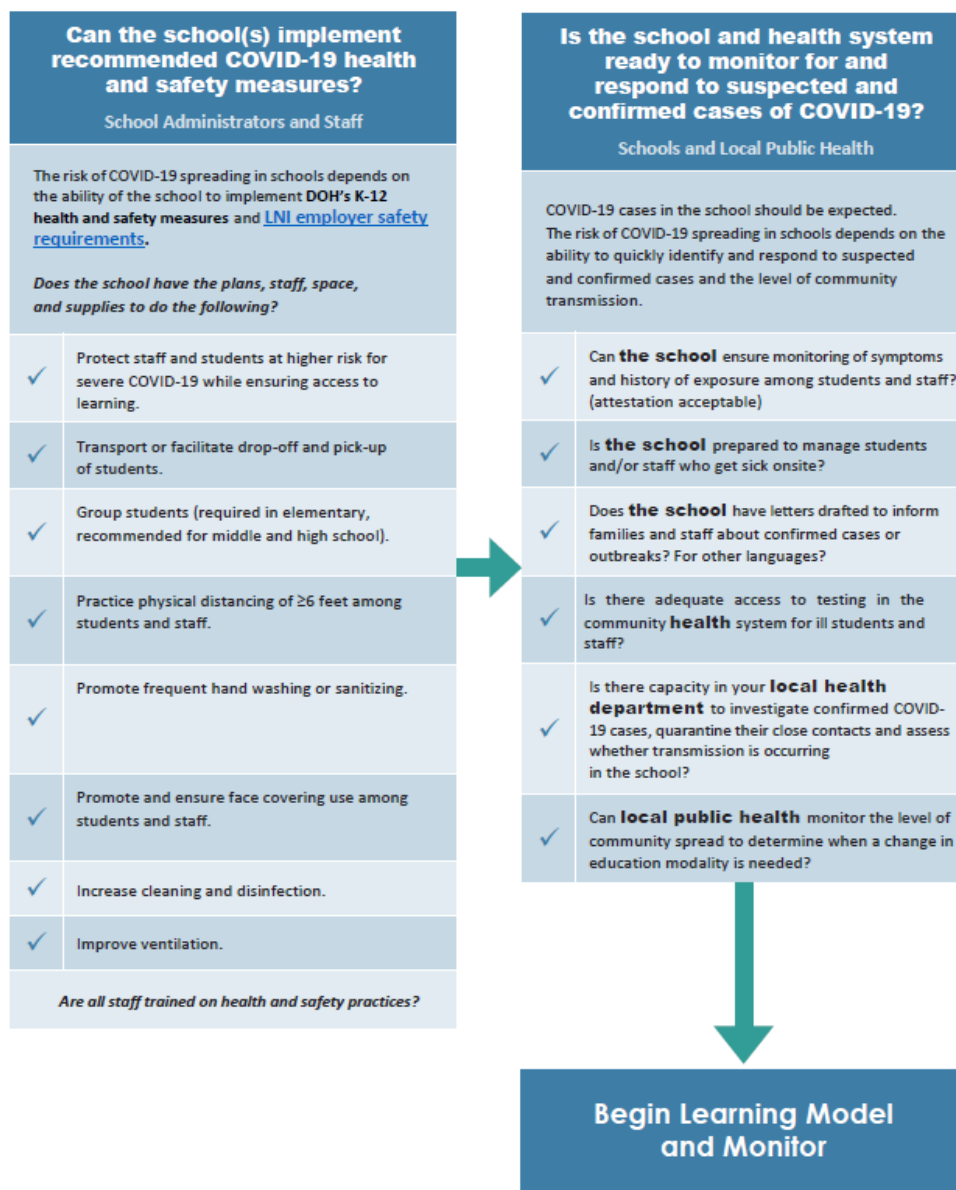


After studying emerging data from other states, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) revised the metrics for **when** local school districts should consider bringing students back into school buildings,<sup>1</sup> and comprehensive health and safety measures for **how** to resume once it is deemed safe.<sup>2</sup> Schools must also follow guidance in Employer Health and Safety Requirements for School Scenarios.<sup>3</sup>

DOH also released guidance for making determinations on who, how, and when to test/screen students and staff.<sup>4</sup> School districts are **required** to meet these health and safety measure **before** they can consider bringing students back into buildings:



After districts have the health and safety measures in place, DOH recommends they weigh both risks and benefits to children, staff, their families, and the broader community. In making these difficult decisions, school administrators should also engage staff and families of students at risk for severe COVID-19, families of students with disabilities, English language learners, students living in poverty, students of color, and families of young students to determine how to best meet the health and education needs of these students and the community.

Districts should consider rates and trends in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations and test positivity in their community along with other health and education risks and benefits to children and their families:

<b>For whom should your community provide in person learning?</b> For School Administrators, Local Health Officers, and Community Stakeholders			
The risk of COVID-19 being introduced into the school and spreading depends on the health and safety measures taken by schools and the level of COVID-19 spread in the community. Consider the following educational modalities based on community transmission and other health and education risks and benefits.			
COVID-19 Activity	HIGH >350 cases/100K/14 days Test positivity >10% Trends in cases and hospitalizations	MODERATE ~50-350 cases/100K /14 days Test positivity 5-10% Trends in cases and hospitalizations	LOW <50 cases/100K/14 days Test positivity <5% Trends in cases and hospitalizations
Education Modality	Phase in in-person learning in groups of 15 or fewer students for pre-K through grade 5 and those with highest needs.  Prioritize Pre-K through grade 3, and students in any grade with disabilities, students living homeless, or those farthest from educational justice.  If schools can demonstrate the ability to limit transmission in the school environment, add grades 4-5.	Phase in in-person learning.  Prioritize Elementary (pre-K - 5) if they are not already receiving in-person learning, and Middle School.  If schools can demonstrate the ability to limit transmission in the school environment, add more high school students when case rates are below about 200/100K/14 days.	Provide in-person learning for all students.
Extra-curricular Activities	Cancel or postpone most in-person extra-curricular activities except those allowed under Safe Start and Governor’s proclamations on COVID-19.	Extra-curricular activities must follow K-12, applicable Safe Start protocols and Governor’s proclamations on COVID-19.	Extra-curricular activities must follow K-12, applicable Safe Start protocols and Governor’s proclamations on COVID-19.
Transition	<p><b>Across all COVID-19 Activity Levels:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When trends in cases and hospitalizations are flat or decreasing, and the school can demonstrate the ability to limit transmission in the school environment, expand access to in-person learning</li> <li>• When trends are increasing, pause expansion of additional in-person learning and maintain access to in-person learning for those who have it. Schools are not required to reduce in-person learning or revert to remote learning based on metrics if the school can demonstrate the ability to limit transmission in the school environment.</li> <li>• Consider other health and education risks and benefits to children and their families</li> </ul> <p>At any COVID-19 level, transition temporarily to full distance learning for 14 days when school meets criteria in DOH’s <a href="#">K-12 Health and Safety Guidance</a> (p 16) or on recommendation of the local health officer.</p>		

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## Citations

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- <sup>1</sup> Washington State Department of Health “Tools to Prepare for Provision of In-Person Learning among K-12 Students at Public and Private Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic” (December 16, 2020)  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/DecisionTree-K12schools.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> Washington State Department of Health “K-12 Schools 2020-2021 Guidance” (December 16, 2020)  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/FallGuidanceK-12.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> OSPI, DOH and Washington State Dept of Labor & Industries “Employer Health and Safety Requirements for School Scenarios” (September 30, 2020)  
<https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/Employer-Health-and-Safety-Requirements-for-School-Scenarios.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> Washington State Department of Health “Washington State K-12 School Testing Guidance” (December 16, 2020)  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-113-K12SchoolTesting.pdf>