

Dear school partners and stakeholders,

With the 2020-21 school year slated to start, you, your colleagues, and the families you serve are preparing to tackle new ways of learning and supporting one another. We see and appreciate your commitment to the health and wellbeing of your students and staff. Below are some updates from the Public Health—Seattle & King County (PHSKC) Schools and Child Care Task Force to support you and your colleagues during this challenging time, including:

1. **\*NEW\*** King County Schools COVID-19 Response Toolkit and FAQ
2. Share these messages with your community
3. Food insecurity in King County
4. King County dedicates \$41 million to COVID-19-related rental assistance and eviction prevention
5. School-community partnerships for students during COVID-19
6. Immunization guidance on K-12 distance learning from DOH/OSPI

### **1. \*NEW\* King County Schools COVID-19 Response Toolkit and FAQ**

PHSKC has released their [King County Schools COVID-19 Response Toolkit](#). Earlier this week, we also published this [Frequently Asked Questions website](#) for schools and child care. Both of these resources are living documents and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

The toolkit includes an outline of key roles and responsibilities of schools in responding to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases among students and staff. We expect to release a brief training video to support use of the toolkit next week.

Additionally, the toolkit includes form letters and fact sheets for you to share with families and staff. Translations in King County's 15 most common languages are in process for family-facing tools and are expected to be published by September 7. We will translate staff-facing communication tools into Spanish. If additional languages would be helpful to reach **your certificated and classified staff**, please let us know and we will do our best to respond to this need.

### **2. Share these messages with your community**

- *How to gather safely: Everyone has a role in stopping the spread of COVID-19*  
Public Health partners continue to develop messaging for children, youth, and families to support community safety and wellness during the pandemic. Washington State Department of Health's (DOH's) [newest blog post](#) outlines the questions and issues to talk through when planning to get together with friends or family. Remember that large gatherings are still not allowed. King County also has a blog post about the [rules and FAQs around social gatherings](#) with friends.
- *Staying safe while enjoying outdoor recreation*  
With increased outdoor activity during the pandemic, there has been a [rise in drownings during the last month](#) in local waters. Tony Gomez, manager for Violence & Injury Prevention for PHSKC, said that "this August is the deadliest in at least the most recent seven years, and we have a ways to go." Children and youth are particularly susceptible to drowning so help us share these safety tips with students and families who are planning to head out to the water or other outdoor recreation activities:

- [Safe Swimming in COVID times](#)
- [Ride Away Your Stress, Safely and Affordably!](#)
- [Community develops multilingual videos to promote salmon fishing on the Duwamish River](#)
- [Seattle-King County Public Health Water Safety Resource page](#)

### **3. Food insecurity in King County**

While closing schools and businesses this past spring helped slow the spread of COVID-19, these strategies appear to have also negatively impacted peoples' abilities to provide food for themselves and their families. A new [Public Health report](#) shows a spike that started this spring in King County households not having enough food to eat. While the situation does not appear to be improving yet, there are new policies and initiatives being established that focus on increasing access to food. For more information and updated data on the economic, social and overall health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in King County, view this [data dashboard](#). You can find a map of [free food resources in King County](#) and other information that may help to address the needs of those most vulnerable in our communities.

### **4. King County dedicates \$41 million to COVID-19-related rental assistance and eviction prevention**

Individuals and families throughout King County economically impacted by COVID-19 due to illness, lost wages, and unemployment may apply for assistance through the [King County Eviction Prevention and Rent Assistance Program](#). The new program dedicates \$41.4 million for emergency housing aid and is expected to assist 7,700 to 10,000 households across the region.

King County will use several approaches to serve as many households as possible, as quickly as possible. Funding is prioritized for the highest-need areas and individuals in King County. To be eligible for assistance, all tenants must have an income that is at or below 50 percent of the Area Median Income over the past 60 days, and must be partially or fully behind at least one month of rent since March 1, 2020. Tenants must also meet one of several secondary criteria, such as having high rent burden, a history of homelessness or eviction, or a disability.

### **5. School-community partnerships for students during COVID-19**

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is that creativity and collaboration will be key to any successful effort. This is particularly true when it comes to supporting Washington's children and youth. To that end, a host of public agencies and community-based organizations came together to create [a framework for school-community partnerships for students](#).

[This document](#) provides tips, tricks, and new and best practices for partnerships between schools/school districts and child care, early learning, expanded learning and youth development, health (mental and physical) and student programs supporting basic needs. It also links to several other sources to help support kids furthest from opportunity. [This document](#) will continue to evolve and Washington state examples will be added in the coming days.

We are all in this together and our kids need us now, more than ever. We hope you will find value and ideas in [this guide](#) and thank you for supporting our students.

### **6. Immunization guidance on K-12 distance learning from DOH/OSPI**

DOH and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) have updated Immunization Guidance on K-12 School Distance Learning that is applicable for the *2020–21 school year and K–12 programs only*. Information and suggested messaging for parents and families are in the document [Distance Learning During COVID-19 – K-12th Grade School Vaccine Requirements](#).

Thank you again for your ongoing commitment to meeting the social-emotional, academic, and health needs of your students. We appreciate you!

*Public Health—Seattle & King County*