

Dear school partners,

This is a heavy week for many. In addition to our updates on local data and guidance, we also share resources this week to support the mental health of your students, staff, and communities. **Please help us share this information broadly.**

This week’s Public Health—Seattle & King County (PHSKC) Schools and Childcare Task Force sector email includes the following topics:

1. Key indicators of COVID-19 activity
2. New Institute of Disease Modeling schools report released
3. Air quality resources
4. Updated schools and childcare documents and translations
5. Youth & all ages suicide risk health advisory
6. COVID-19 Behavioral Health Group Impact Reference Guide

1. Key indicators of COVID-19 activity

The following chart includes King County data aligned with key indicators of COVID-19 activity outlined in the [Decision Tree for Provision of In Person Learning among K-12 Students at Public and Private Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) released by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). The following is data as of **November 4, 2020**. This data is available and regularly updated on the PHSKC [COVID-19 data dashboard webpage](#).

Current King County COVID-19 Activity Level:		HIGH
Education Modality:	Strongly recommend distance learning with the option for limited in-person learning in small groups, or cohorts, of students for the highest need students, such as students with disabilities, students living homeless, those farthest from educational justice, and younger learners.	
Extracurricular:	Strongly recommend canceling or postponing all in-person extracurricular activities, including sports, performances, clubs, events, etc.	

Activity Level Key:	Low	Moderate	High
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Indicator	Target/Range		Current Status
Cases/100K/14 days ¹	High	>75 cases/100K/14 days	135 cases/100K/14 days
	Moderate	25-75 cases/100K/14 days	
	Low	<25 cases/100K/14 days	
Trend in cases and hospitalizations ²	Flat or decreasing		Cases: Increasing Hospitalizations: Flat/decreasing
Test positivity ³	<5%		3.8%

¹Total number of cases for the last 14 days per 100,000 residents.

²Total number of cases for the last 14 days per 100,000 residents **AND** Rate hospitalization per 100,000 residents in the past 14 days compared to the prior 14 days.

³Percent of COVID-19 tests with positive results over the past 14 days

2. New Institute of Disease Modeling schools report released

Today, DOH released a [new report](#) by the [Institute for Disease Modeling \(IDM\)](#) that quantifies how various diagnostic screening scenarios could help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission associated with reopening schools. The report, the third in a series by IDM, affirms that while there are still risks associated with returning to full in-person instruction, the risks could be significantly reduced through school-based countermeasures, hybrid scheduling, and a phased-in approach that brings back K-5 grades first.

The findings include:

- **If schools can implement countermeasures consistently and community transmission is low, then the value of testing people for COVID-19 is limited.** The analysis looked at several different testing strategies using PCR tests and rapid antigen tests, both individually and in combination.
- **Consistent with previous analyses, transmission in schools is greatly reduced through a combination of school-based countermeasures and hybrid or phased-in scheduling.** Routine diagnostic screening of asymptomatic people can, however, have an impact on reducing transmission if schools are a significant source of infection. Daily symptom screening followed by diagnostic testing and contact tracing remain important along with other countermeasures.
- **The number of in-person days lost compared to a typical 5-day school week is largely due to scheduling, not people staying home to quarantine or isolate.** Frequent screening with antigen tests does slightly increase in-person days lost, but less than 5% of days lost are due to health concerns, including false-positive diagnostic screening results.
- **The report also reaffirms the importance of reducing community transmission prior to reopening K-12 schools for in-person learning and implementing school-based countermeasures.** Countermeasures include masking, cohorting students, daily symptom screening, follow-up diagnostic testing, contact tracing, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and improved ventilation. Without countermeasures, up to 45% of teachers and staff and 33% of students could become infected in the first three months; countermeasures reduce this risk to less than 2%, even with a full schedule of five days of in-person classes.

Today, DOH will host a media briefing at 11:15am **today** to discuss the new IDM report. TVW will livestream the briefing [here](#).

3. Air quality resources

As a reminder, for information and options related to ventilation in your school buildings see DOH's recommendations for [Ventilation and Air Quality for Reducing Transmission of COVID-19](#) or [CDC's guidance for improving ventilation and increasing filtration in schools](#). If you need additional support, PHSKC has staff on hand to answer questions you may have.

Email schoolresponse@kingcounty.gov. Lastly, the Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) [Collaborative on Health and the Environment](#) is hosting a webinar on November 10 at 11am PST titled "Indoor Air Quality in Schools and Childcare Facilities During COVID-19." Learn more and register [here](#).

4. Updated schools and childcare documents and translations

Minor adjustments to PHSKC [schools](#) and [childcare guidance](#) and related documents have been published to align with State and National guidance. Most associated translations are now posted online as well. The following documents have been updated:

- Childcare guidance:
 - [Guidance for administrators](#)
 - [Exposure notification letter for families](#)
 - [COVID-19 fact sheet for families](#)
- K-12 schools guidance:
 - [King County Schools COVID-19 Response Toolkit](#)
 - [Fact sheet: When can I return to school](#) (updated translations in process)
 - [Return to school following illness exposure guidance](#)



Health Advisory
Increased Suicide Risk

5. Youth & all ages suicide risk health advisory

Four young people under 18 years old died by suicide in King County during the month of October, as reported to PHSKC. These tragedies appear to be unrelated to one another and are an increase from recent months and from the same month last year. Local data and disaster research suggest that suicide rates throughout our population may rise as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. The purpose of the attached health advisory is to highlight best practices and support all health care and social service providers in promoting well-being and safety for people of all ages. Our common goal is to prevent further escalation in this troubling trend. Please review the attached health advisory for additional information and resources to share with your staff, students, and families.

6. COVID-19 Behavioral Health Group Impact Reference Guide

While we are all carrying a lot these days as we move through this pandemic, educators and others working in schools are managing a unique menu of stressors. The DOH has released a [COVID-19 Behavioral Health Group Impact Reference Guide](#) with a section specific to educators which provides information on the predicted behavioral health impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The overview, tools, and examples are provided to inform messaging, training, and interventions that are likely to be the most effective for educators at a specific phase in the course of the pandemic. We hope that it serves as a resource to support and sustain you and your staff.

In health,

The PHSKC Schools and Childcare Task Force