

Dear school partners,

We are sending out our sector email a bit early this week based on new data showing increases in COVID-19 cases in King County. As you will see in the key indicators of COVID-19 activity below, after two months of declining cases of COVID-19 are [on the rise again](#) in King County. King County is currently in a **high** COVID-19 activity level range according to the Department of Health’s [Decision Tree for Provision of In Person Learning among K-12 Students at Public and Private Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). We offer additional information below.

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. [COVID-19 cases are rising in King County – what does that mean for schools?](#)
3. More frequent data updates

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 **October 12, 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	86 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/small increase
Test positivity ³	<5%		2.4%

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

² Total 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.

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

2. COVID-19 cases are rising in King County – what does that mean for schools?

Detailed information is available in [this blog post from PHSKC](#). In short, for schools that have already brought back some students in-person, PHSKC does not advise rolling back those measures at this time. Continuity for kids and educators is one important factor that school districts need to weigh before making quick shifts to all distance-learning, particularly for early grades.

Schools that are ready this week to begin bringing younger grades and students with special needs back into classrooms can continue cautiously, provided they are taking the precautions recommended by state and local health officials — that includes wearing masks, physical distancing in the classroom, improved ventilation, enhanced sanitation, and grouping kids in cohorts to limit their exposure.

The most effective thing we can do to allow kids to learn in person, and to protect our families, businesses, and neighbors, is to reduce the amount of COVID-19 spreading in our communities. That only works when each one of us does a few tried-and-true things consistently, even when it's hard: wear a mask in public and always when around others indoors, keep at least 6 feet of space from others, limit your social gatherings to as few people outside your household as possible, avoid crowded indoor spaces, and, if you feel sick or had close contact with someone who is ill, isolate yourself from others right away and get a COVID-19 test.

3. More frequent data updates

All of last week, all data elements of the [Decision Tree for Provision of In Person Learning among K-12 Students at Public and Private Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) are now updated daily. This includes the:

- [Cases/100K/14 days](#) (updated Monday through Friday)
- [Trends in cases and hospitalizations](#) (updated Monday through Friday)
- [Test positivity](#) (updated every day)

In health,

PHSKC Schools and Childcare Task Force