

**Sector Email 2.18.21**

Subject header: Updates on COVID-19 from Public Health - Seattle & King County (PHSKC)

Schools

Dear school partners,

As we approach a year since the pandemic began in earnest in our region, I encourage you to look back at the amazing skills we have learned, the flexibility we have developed, and the ways we have grown. We still have further to go, but we have come so far already, too!

**Reminder:** please review the [King County Schools COVID-19 Response Toolkit](#), [related resources](#), and [training videos](#).

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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. Updated CDC Guidance for Schools
3. Vaccine updates
  - a. Ways to get involved
4. Washington State Schools Outbreak Report
5. Department of Health & Fred Hutch COVID Resource Website
6. Special Enrollment for Washington Health Care
7. Upcoming Events
8. Update! Schools and Childcare Task Force office hours
9. PHSKC support and assistance to schools survey

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**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 document titled [Tools to Prepare 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 are data as of **February 18, 2021**. These data are available and regularly updated on the PHSKC [COVID-19 data dashboard webpage \(links to specific data points are included in the following chart\)](#).

<b>Current King County COVID-19 Activity Level:</b>		<b>MODERATE</b>
<b>Education Modality:</b>	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.
<b>Extracurricular:</b>	Extra-curricular activities must follow K-12, applicable Safe Start protocols and Governor’s proclamations on COVID-19.
<b>Transition:</b>	<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 At any COVID-19 level, transition temporarily to full distance learning for 14 days when school meets criteria in DOH’s K-12 Health and Safety Guidance (p 16) or on recommendation of the local health officer.</li> </ul>

<b>Activity Level Key:</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>
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Indicator	Target/Range		Current Status
Cases/100K/14 days <sup>1</sup>	<b>High</b>	>350 cases/100K/14 days	<a href="#">129 cases/100K/14 days</a>
	<b>Moderate</b>	50-350 cases/100K/14 days	
	<b>Low</b>	<50 cases/100K/14 days	
Trend in cases and hospitalizations <sup>2</sup>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cases:</b> <a href="#">Decreasing</a></li> <li>• <b>Hospitalizations:</b> <a href="#">Flat/decreasing</a></li> </ul>
Test positivity <sup>3</sup>	<b>High</b>	>10%	NA <sup>3</sup>
	<b>Moderate</b>	5-10%	
	<b>Low</b>	<5%	

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

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>Percent of COVID-19 tests with positive results over the past 14 days—**Percent positive is not available for the most recent 21 days, due to delays in negative tests being reported through the Washington State Department of Health**

## 2. Updated CDC Guidance for schools

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated guidance for K-12 schools on operating in person during COVID-19. Updates include recommendations for [phased reopening based on new indicators](#), and a [Readiness and Action Planning Tool](#) to help communities prepare for phased return to in-person learning. This guidance continues to emphasize what we know works best to limit the spread of COVID-19 in in-person learning settings: encouraging staff and students to stay home when they are feeling ill or have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19; teaching, reinforcing and practicing hand washing and sanitizing; teaching, reinforcing and practicing consistent and correct use of masks; and encouraging and supporting physical distance between people in schools. CDC guidance also provides resources to support schools to plan in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 to limit the spread of the virus. The full updated guidance and support tools can be found on the CDC's website by clicking [here](#). The Federal Department of Education has also created an accompanying handbook to support the CDC's guidance which can be accessed [here](#).

Governor Inslee noted in his press conference on February 16, 2021 that WA DOH does not expect to change state-level K-12 guidance. Our local guidance and tools are unchanged. We will notify you via this weekly email if changes are made.

### **3. Vaccine updates**

*Schools play a critical role in sharing out trusted messaging about vaccine eligibility, availability, and access. We rely on you to help us get out the following information to your communities and colleagues.*

#### **a. Prepare your communities and staff for when they are eligible for vaccines**

Encourage your staff and communities to sign up for [Phase Finder](#) (currently available in English and Spanish). This system from the State DOH will notify individuals when they are eligible for vaccination.

If you need language interpretation or can't use the online Phase Finder tool, call the Washington state's **COVID-19 Assistance Hotline**: Dial 1-800-525-0127 or 1-888-856-5816, then press #. Available Monday-Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, Sunday, and [observed state holidays](#) 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For language interpretation, state your preferred language when you are connected.

It is not too early to start learning what to expect when you do become eligible for the vaccine. Visit our [King County COVID-19 vaccine website](#) to learn more about getting vaccinated in King County. While we wait for "our turn," we can also help our family members, friends, and neighbors who *are* eligible get connected to Phase Finder and find an appointment.

### **4. Washington State Schools Outbreak Report**

The Washington Department of Health released a detailed report addressing [COVID-19 outbreaks in Washington K-12 schools](#) on February 11, 2021. In addition to providing initial statewide data about the incidence of COVID-19 in K-12 settings, the report also provides some helpful definitions for understanding how outbreaks and cases are tracked. Data is broken down by county, how the virus was transmitted, and by age. To access the full report, please click [here](#).

### **5. Department of Health & Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center COVID Resource Website**

Washington State Department of Health partnered with Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center to launch a COVID resource website. Get on-click answers to common questions like “When can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?” and “What are vaccine side effects?” on <https://preventcovidwa.org/> and in Spanish at <https://preventcovidwa.org/es/pagina-principal/>. The site has short videos addressing common misinformation about vaccines and masks for download as well.

## 6. Special Enrollment for Washington Health Care

The pandemic continues to rage on, harming not only our physical health, but also devastating jobs. Many people are finding themselves in sudden need to health insurance. There is now a [Special Enrollment Period for](#) free or low-cost insurance through Washington’s Affordable Care Act health exchange – *Washington Healthplanfinder*. The enrollment period is open from Feb. 15-May 15, 2021. The enrollment period is open to anyone who is currently uninsured. Public Health – Seattle & King County has a team of [Health Insurance Navigators](#) available to help answer questions and walk through the process of applying and selecting the right insurance plan. You can also browse plans and sign up directly through [Washington Healthplanfinder](#).

## 7. Upcoming events

### a. Mental Health

- i. [WELL BEINGS](#) – February 25, 7pm PST a national campaign from public media, in collaboration with a coalition of partners including PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs and their student journalists, created to address the health needs in America. The campaign debuts with the Youth Mental Health Project — emphasizing the mental health and voices of youth to raise awareness, address stigma and encourage compassion. Experts, including teens with lived experience, will discuss mental health challenges related to current events, ways to overcome barriers and reduce stigma, coping mechanisms and resources for getting support. For more information, visit the [Eventbrite Registration](#)
- ii. **Emotional Wellness Resources for Marginalized Communities**
  1. [Monthly Virtual Mental Health Support](#): Receive FREE mental health support from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) therapists for BIPOC individuals and communities most impacted by the pandemic and racism
  2. [South King Emotional Wellness League \(SKEWL\)](#) was formed to address the emotional well-being of historically marginalized communities in South King County most impacted by Covid-19 and police violence.

### b. Environmental Health

- i. **A National Conversation on Indoor Air & K-12 Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic** Tuesday, February 23, 2021 from 11:00am-1:00pm PST Sessions will feature experts discussing the quality of indoor air in schools; technical solutions to improve ventilation; how policy makers can meet the challenge; and how these policies can be effectively implemented. [Learn more and register here.](#)
- ii. **Ventilation and Virus Mitigation in Schools: Creating a Game Plan to Reduce COVID-19 Risk and Make Lasting Improvements to Indoor Air Quality** – February 25, 10-11:30am PST: Register for this webinar to learn how to create a game plan for mitigating risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 in the near term and prioritizing the top 5 IAQ improvements to ensure healthy air in schools in the long term. Webinar

participants will acquire the skills to assess their current air handling capabilities (e.g., effectiveness of filtration, ability to bring in fresh air, and energy efficiency) and create a plan to improve air quality using a free online risk assessment. [Register here.](#)

#### **8. No Schools and Childcare Task Force office hours this week!**

Due to many schools and districts being on midwinter break this week, we will not be hosting our normal Thursday “Office Hours.” They will resume next week.

#### **9. PHSKC support and assistance to schools survey**

*Please help us evaluate our work and continue to improve!*

A project out of the University of Washington School of Nursing seeks to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of PHSKC’s COVID-19 response support for schools through a confidential 10-minute survey and follow-up interviews. Participation is open to any King County school- or district-affiliated individual. Themes identified will be shared back to PHSKC. The [survey can be accessed via the link here](#) and is open until Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

*In health,*

*The PHSKC Schools and Childcare Task Force*

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#### Childcare

Dear childcare partners,

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

1. Need PPE?
2. Vaccine updates
  - a. Is it True? Myths and facts about the COVID-19 Vaccine
  - b. Ways to get involved
3. Updated Washington Department of Health Childcare Guidance

4. Department of Health & Fred Hutch COVID Resource Website
5. Special Enrollment for Washington Health Care
6. Mask and new COVID variants
7. Upcoming Events

### **1. Need Personal Protective Equipment?**

If you are in need of the proper personal protective equipment – such as masks, gloves, or face shields – please reach out to Child Care Resources or contact your Early Achiever’s Coach!

### **2. Vaccine updates**

*Childcare providers play a critical role in sharing out trusted messaging about vaccine eligibility, availability, and access. We rely on you to help us get out the following information to your communities and colleagues.*

#### **a. “Is it True?” myths and facts about COVID-19 vaccine**

It is easy to come across incorrect information about the safety of the coronavirus vaccine. It can be hard to know what to believe, so Public Health created this page to help understand the facts. The [Is It True?](#) Page delivers facts on the how vaccine affects your body, vaccine ingredients, and vaccines and systemic racism.

#### **b. Prepare your communities and staff for when they are eligible for vaccines**

Encourage your staff and communities to sign up for [Phase Finder](#) (currently available in English and Spanish). This system from the State DOH will notify individuals when they are eligible for vaccination.

If you need language interpretation or can’t use the online Phase Finder tool, call the Washington state’s **COVID-19 Assistance Hotline**: Dial 1-800-525-0127 or 1-888-856-5816, then press #. Available Monday-Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, Sunday, and [observed state holidays](#) 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For language interpretation, state your preferred language when you are connected.

It is not too early to start learning what to expect when you do become eligible for the vaccine. Visit our [King County COVID-19 vaccine website](#) to learn more about getting vaccinated in King County. While we wait for “our turn,” we can also help our family members, friends, and neighbors who *are* eligible get connected to Phase Finder and find an appointment.

### **3. Updated Washington Department of Health Guidance for Childcare**

The state Department of Health released updated guidance for Child Care, Youth Development and Day Camps during the COVID-19 Outbreak on February 10, 2021. The guidance was updated to align with recent state level recommendations issued by Governor Inslee and to provide some clarifications around program typed addressed in the guidance. To review the complete document, [please click here](#).

#### 4. Department of Health & Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center COVID Resource Website

Washington State Department of Health partnered with Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center to launch a COVID resource website. Get on-click answers to common questions like “When can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?” and “What are vaccine side effects?” on <https://preventcovidwa.org/> and in Spanish at <https://preventcovidwa.org/es/pagina-principal/>. The site has short videos addressing common misinformation about vaccines and masks for download as well.

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#### 6. Upcoming events

- a. [Child Care Providers: How to Apply for the Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\) - A Workshop to Access Forgivable Loans to Sustain Your Business!](#) - Join this [webinar](#) to learn about eligibility guidelines, get advice on how to ensure the PPP application goes smoothly; hear from a peer child care provider who benefitted from a PPP loan and have the opportunity to get questions answered from lenders and technical assistance providers. [Click here to register](#).
- b. [WELL BEINGS](#) – February 25, 7pm PST: a national campaign from public media, in collaboration with a coalition of partners including PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs and their student journalists, created to address the health needs in America. The campaign debuts with the Youth Mental Health Project — emphasizing the mental health and voices of youth to raise awareness, address stigma and encourage compassion. Experts, including teens with lived experience, will discuss mental health challenges related to current events, ways to overcome barriers and reduce stigma, coping mechanisms, and resources for getting support. For more information, visit the [Eventbrite Registration](#) and Live Stream link ([www.WellBeings.org/KCTS9](http://www.WellBeings.org/KCTS9))
- c. **Emotional Wellness Resources for Marginalized Communities**
  - i. [Monthly Virtual Mental Health Support](#): Receive FREE mental health support from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) therapists for BIPOC individuals and communities most impacted by the pandemic and racism
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