

**Gary Niels** <gniels@paispa.org>  
 Reply-To: LargeSchoolHeads@paispa.org  
 To: smallschoolheads@paispa.org, largeschoolheads@paispa.org

Dear All, I trust that some of this information might be helpful. Gary

**March 30, 2021**

Dear Colleague,

Yesterday, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) [shared information on estimated school district and charter school allocations under the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief \(ARP ESSER\) Fund.](#)

Today, PDE and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) write to share two important updates to our health and safety recommendations that will go into effect on Monday, April 5 for Pennsylvania's school communities.

### **Updated Social/Physical Distancing Recommendations**

To align with recently updated [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) recommendations](#), we revised our social/physical distancing recommendations in classrooms and other instructional spaces. More specifically, these recommendations reflect the CDC changes regarding 3 feet versus 6 feet of physical distancing in classroom settings.

All Pre-K to12 schools should continue to implement strategies that limit the number of individuals in classrooms and other learning spaces, and interactions between groups of students and staff, regardless of whether or not individuals have received a COVID-19 vaccine. All schools should align distancing protocols with the recommendations for physical distancing outlined in the CDC's Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention.

[Access information on updated social/physical distancing measures on PDE's website.](#)

It is important to note that universal masking remains a requirement.

### **Updated Recommendations on Handling COVID-19 Cases in Schools**

We also updated our recommendations on how schools should respond to confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school buildings. The recommendations consider the level of community transmission in each county, the number of cases among students and staff in each school building during the past 14 days, and the size of the school building. Our updated recommendations for closures to in-person learning reduces the number of days out of school in some instances.

[Access more information on these updated recommendations, associated charts, as well as answers to FAQs on PDE's website.](#)

### **Summer Camp Guidance**

In addition, the [DOH has recently updated its summer camp guidance](#), which remains mostly unchanged from the guidance originally distributed in July of 2020 (the guidance does not apply to public school-operated summer programs or extended school year services). Associated [answers to summer camp FAQs are also available on the DOH website.](#)

We will continue to review and revise additional health and safety guidance as warranted in the days and weeks ahead. Thank you for continuing to serve and support your school community as we navigate this pandemic together.

Sincerely,

Wendy Braund, COVID-19 Response Director, Pennsylvania Department of Health  
 Matt Stem, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education

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 Gary J. Niels  
 Executive Director  
 Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS)  
 P.O. Box 590  
 Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

Office: 610.567.2960  
 Mobile: 412.491.9606