

[PAIS Large School Heads] FYI: Updated PDE Guidance

1 message

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Tue, Apr 6, 2021 at 7:52 AM

FYI. This is just a recommendation.

Departments of Health and Education: Departments of Health, Education update instructional model recommendations for schools.

Text of April 5 press release.

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania departments of Health and Education today announced modifications to their [instructional model recommendations for Pre-K to 12 schools](#) in response to updated guidance recently issued by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

“We remain committed to doing everything we can to create the conditions for a return to in-person instruction as soon as safely possible,” said Acting Secretary of Education Noe Ortega. “Our updated instructional model recommendations create additional flexibilities for school leaders to make decisions at the local level consistent with best practices and with public health and safety at the forefront.”

In alignment with updates from the CDC, the departments recommend K-12 public schools in counties with a moderate level of community transmission of COVID-19 now consider returning students to full in-person instruction in addition to blended/hybrid learning model. Counties with a substantial level of community transmission should consider blended/hybrid learning in addition to remote learning for K-12 students.

The instructional models, which are also available on [PDE's website](#), are as follows:

Level of Community Transmission in the County // Incidence Rate per 100,000 Residents (Most Recent 7 Days) // AND/OR PCR Percent Positivity (Most Recent 7 Days) // Recommended Instructional Models*

Low // <10 AND <5% // Full in-person Model

Moderate // 10 to <100 OR 5% to <10% // Full in-person Model OR Blended Learning Model

Substantial // ≥100 OR ≥10% // Blended Learning Model OR Full Remote Learning Model

**For all instructional models, it may be appropriate for a school entity to provide in-person instruction for targeted student populations (e.g., students with disabilities, English Learners, etc.) regardless of grade.*

“A safe return to in-person instruction will look different across every school, district, and county depending on a variety of factors, one of which is the spread of COVID-19 within these communities,” Department of Health Acting Secretary Alison Beam said. “As we look to protect the safety and well-being of school staff and students, it is critical for everyone to continue proven public health practices of washing hands, wearing a mask, and practicing social distancing regardless of instructional model offered.”

For the week ending April 2, there were five counties in the low level of transmission, 17 counties in the moderate level of transmission, and 45 counties were in the substantial [level of community transmission](#):

- Low – Cameron, Forest, Fulton, Potter, Sullivan
- Moderate – Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Fayette, Indiana, Jefferson, McKean, Mercer, Snyder, Somerset, Tioga, Union, Venango, Warren
- Substantial – Adams, Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Berks, Bradford, Bucks, Butler, Carbon, Centre, Chester, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Elk, Franklin, Greene, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lawrence, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Montgomery, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Washington, Wayne, Westmoreland, Wyoming, York

This update is a recommendation and not a mandate. The transition of instructional models is dependent on local factors, including the size of the school building, the classroom size, resources, proportion of staff and students with special needs and underlying health conditions, and the ability to accommodate learning with equal access for all students.

The Wolf Administration continues to maintain that local school leaders are best positioned to make instructional decisions for their communities that account for the county level transmission metrics and other local factors.

The departments will continue to monitor evolving research and data and adjust recommendations and resources accordingly.

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