



*Every Student Matters, Every Moment Counts*

**Morton School District #214**  
**Home of the Timberwolves!**

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Date: December 16th, 2020

RE: Updated State Guidance for COVID-19 Pandemic

This afternoon Governor Inslee, OSPI, and DOH updated the K-12 Decision Tree which establishes state recommendations for returning students to school. Before getting into the recent changes, our county Public Health can issue their own guidance as they did earlier this school year which allowed schools in our county to return students earlier than the state guidance. Morton School District will continue to connect and work with Lewis County Public Health on their guidance in order for us to safely return more students to school.

The largest change to the state guidance is summarized in the chart that follows this message. Here is a list of the changes:

- The high category is changed from being over 75 new cases per 100,000 in the last 14 days to over 350 new cases per 100,000 in the last 14 days.
  - While in the high category hybrid learning is still the modality of learning.
  - Exceptions are expanded to those who are furthest from educational justice.
- Moderate is changed to a range of 50 to 350 new cases per 100,000 in the last 14 days.
  - Once we reach the moderate level our elementary and middle school students may move from hybrid modality to fully in-person for these grades.
  - As the number of new cases reaches a number below 200 per 100,000 in the last 14 days a school may add high school students to full in-person.
- The low category is changed from 25 to 50 new cases per 100,000 in the last 14 days.
  - Full in-person learning for all students.

### ***What does this mean for Morton now?***

First, our numbers per 100,000 in the last 14 days as of the date of publication is still high. Our county is currently at 498.2. However, it was not too long ago that our numbers were much lower. If we as a county can lower our number then we can soon return our kids to more in-person learning.

A change that will take place during the winter break is that the building administration will begin to look at the student population and make determinations as to who meets the criteria of 'furthest from educational justice.' Students who meet this requirement may begin more in-person learning beginning January 4th when invited from their building administration.

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We will continue to watch the county numbers and make further announcements as to changes that may occur to the educational modality. As a district, we urge all in our county to take the steps necessary to lower our numbers so kids can be on-site and learning with their teachers and peers.

As for athletics, we will be waiting for further guidance from the Governor or the county to guide our actions. The only current guidance for athletics either comes from the Governor or is based on the Governor’s proclamations. Our county could issue their own guidance as well, yet this is a step they have not taken up to this point.

For the remainder of this month and for the immediate future our current hybrid models will continue as is.

<b>For whom should your community provide in person learning?</b> For School Administrators, Local Health Officers, and Community Stakeholders			
The risk of COVID-19 being introduced into the school and spreading depends on the health and safety measures taken by schools and the level of COVID-19 spread in the community. <b>Consider the following educational modalities based on community transmission and other health and education risks and benefits.</b>			
<b>COVID-19 Activity</b>	<b>HIGH</b> >350 cases/100K/14 days Test positivity >10% Trends in cases and hospitalizations	<b>MODERATE</b> ~50-350 cases/100K /14 days Test positivity 5-10% Trends in cases and hospitalizations	<b>LOW</b> <50 cases/100K/14 days Test positivity <5% Trends in cases and hospitalizations
<b>Education Modality</b>	Phase in in-person learning in groups of 15 or fewer students for pre-K through grade 5 and those with highest needs.  Prioritize Pre-K through grade 3, and students in any grade with disabilities, students living homeless, or those farthest from educational justice.  If schools can demonstrate the ability to limit transmission in the school environment, add grades 4-5.	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.	Provide in-person learning for all students.
<b>Extra-curricular Activities</b>	Cancel or postpone most in-person extra-curricular activities except those allowed under Safe Start and Governor’s proclamations on COVID-19.	Extra-curricular activities must follow K-12, applicable Safe Start protocols and Governor’s proclamations on COVID-19.	Extra-curricular activities must follow K-12, applicable Safe Start protocols and Governor’s proclamations on COVID-19.
<b>Transition</b>	<b>Across all COVID-19 Activity Levels:</b> <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</li> </ul> At any COVID-19 level, transition temporarily to full distance learning for 14 days when school meets criteria in DOH’s <a href="#">K-12 Health and Safety Guidance</a> (p 16) or on recommendation of the local health officer.		