

Summary of December 16 changes:

- The Department of Health (DOH) revised the metrics to inform local decisions around the provision of in-person learning and the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in school environments. These revisions were based on emerging research and data gathered by state and national officials.
- These changes include revisions to the COVID-19 incidence rates to consider when making decisions about who to prioritize in-person learning for and further clarification that local leaders should consider test positivity and trends in cases and hospitalizations to inform decisions around in person learning.
- DOH defined a maximum 'small group' size of 15 for learning when disease activity is high and defined our 'youngest learners'.
- DOH moved away from a 'decision tree.' This toolkit now includes two checklists that ensure readiness to implement all required DOH Health and Safety Measures and LNI requirements, and a matrix that summarizes our recommendations for the provision of in-person learning based on the community's metrics. The introduction and background sections were updated to reflect the rationale for the changes.

DOH recommends continued, cautious in-person learning can occur at community COVID-19 rates higher than established in the initial versions of this framework. The updated case rates in this version reflect DOH's best estimate of appropriate parameters given these findings.

- High COVID-19 activity: At this level, DOH recommends in person learning for pre-K through grade 5. Schools should prioritize the youngest learners—pre-K, Kindergarten, and grades 1-3—and those with the highest needs (from any grade), such as students with disabilities, students living homeless, or those farthest from educational justice, using small group instruction of 15 or fewer students and strict cohorting due to the level of community transmission. Then phase in grades 4-5, similarly in small groups.
- Moderate COVID-19 activity: At this activity level, DOH recommends careful phasing in of in-person learning starting with any elementary students not already in-person and middle school students. Then over time, adding high school after middle school and when rates drop below 200 cases per 100,000 over 14 days. Low COVID-19 activity: At this activity level, DOH recommends the provision of in-person learning for all students, prioritizing full time in-person learning for elementary students. If space allows, full time in person learning can be added for middle and high school students.