

2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR



DULUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
RETURN TO LEARN PLANNING

[www.ISD709.org/ReturnToLearn](http://www.ISD709.org/ReturnToLearn)

## 2020 Return to Learn

# Return to Learn Update



ISD 709

# Guiding Principles

FOR RE-OPENING SCHOOLS

- 1 Ensure the safety and wellness of students and staff
- 2 Deliver high-quality instruction to students, regardless of delivery model
- 3 Equity: Ensuring all means all
- 4 Optimize use of resources (space & materials)
- 5 Community and stakeholder engagement in plan development

*Equity Criteria:*

Access

Participation

Representation

Outcomes

[ISD709.org/Equity](https://ISD709.org/Equity)

## Previously Shared Model

Given current and projected COVID rates, we will be in distance learning at elementary and secondary levels will continue through at least the end of first semester on January 21, 2021.

## Objectives

- To review the new state guidance
- To review the planning necessary to restart full in-person classes for kindergarten through second grade on Monday, January 25, and grades three through five on Monday, February 8. (*Families may choose to remain in distance learning*)

## Governor's New Guidance

The new state guidance is designed to prioritize in-person learning for the state's youngest students. Per the Governor's announcement:

- Schools play a critical role in the health, well-being, and education of Minnesota's children.
- Youngest kids are less susceptible to serious complications from COVID-19.
- We have learned how to reduce spread in schools from success in other settings.

[Recent research shared by the CDC](#) indicates that children who tested positive for COVID 19 were more likely to have attended gatherings such as weddings, parties and playdates and not as likely to have attended child care or school in-person.

## 2020 Return to Learn

According to the [new state guidelines](#), returning to full in-person learning at elementary requires a rolling start, with no more than 3 grade level bands added during a two-week period.

[Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan](#) requires 2 to 5 days for preparation and transition to a less restrictive model change. We would use three days, beginning after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday Monday January 18. Friday January 22 is semester break.

As per the state's Safe Learning Plan, our middle school and high school students must continue with distance learning, with exploration and planning for returning to in-person learning as conditions and guidance allow.

# Next Steps:

- Continue planning for safe and successful return to in-person instruction
- Conduct consultation with Minnesota Department of Health regarding secondary schools on January 4th
- Implement process to determine who wishes to remain in distance learning
- Continue to monitor and implement quickly changing state and local guidance
- Continue communication and collaboration with all stakeholders

*2020 Return to Learn*

## Additional Resource Sides



## *2020 Return to Learn*

Based on evolving knowledge and understanding of the virus, the Safe Learning Plan has been updated so that early learning and elementary schools reduce the use of county data as a singular determining point when considering their learning models, and mitigation strategies are increased.

The intent is to help get students back in classrooms while keeping students, families, educators and staff safe.

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Every early learning program and elementary school across the state may choose to operate an in-person or hybrid learning model as long as they are able to implement the additional mitigation strategies listed below including a rolling start process in which students will gradually be brought back in the building.

## 2020 Return to Learn

Middle school and high schools will follow the same protocol and parameters listed in steps one through five of the Safe Learning Plan to determine their learning models.

Policy Option	Range (14-day case rate per 10,000 people)
In-person learning for all students	0 to less than 10
Elementary in-person, Middle/high school hybrid	10 to less than 20
Both hybrid	20 to less than 30
Elementary hybrid, Middle/high school distance	30 to less than 50
Both distance	50 or more

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Middle and high schools must either follow the plans they have shared with families about their learning model, or they can choose a more restrictive model.

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Any school – elementary, middle, or high school – that is in-person learning or hybrid learning must implement the mitigation strategies listed below.

In order to safely transition to an in-person learning model, the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Education require schools implement a rolling start process in which students will gradually be brought back in the building.

For an acceptable rolling start strategy, no more than three additional grades bands can be introduced into the building in a two week time period when implementing an in-person learning model for the entire school building. This includes schools transitioning from hybrid learning or distance learning to in-person learning, and schools transitioning from distance learning to hybrid learning.

## **Additional Required Mitigation Strategies and Tools Schools Must Implement for Any In-Person or Hybrid Learning Model:**

- Implement a rolling start process for students to be brought back to the building.
- Execute COVID-19 testing program (training and saliva test kits provided by the State; optional for school staff) every other week for all school staff, beginning January 4, 2021.
- Face masks and face shields must be worn together by school staff at all times.
- When educators cannot be six feet from students (small group and individual instruction), when possible add a clear barrier between the adult and student.

## **Additional Required Mitigation Strategies and Tools Schools Must Implement for Any In-Person or Hybrid Learning Model**

- Face coverings must be worn when engaging in indoor physical activity (e.g., during indoor recess, indoor physical education class, or when exercising in a gym)
- For early learning and elementary schools only: All student meal times and specialist lessons must be held in the classroom or outside (weather permitting). Physical education classes may continue to be held indoors outside of individual classrooms so long as students and staff are wearing face coverings.
- For in-person only: three feet of physical distancing or more is strongly recommended

## **Required for In-Person and Hybrid Learning**

- Prioritize COVID-19 testing every other week for all staff, beginning January 4, 2021
- Face masks and shields worn together by staff at all times
- When educators cannot be 6ft from students (small group and individual instruction), when possible add a clear barrier between the adult and student
- For early learning and elementary schools only: Students remain in classroom for entire school day, excluding outdoor recess time and physical education classes.
  - Meals will be served in the classroom
  - Teacher rotate into classrooms depending on subjects



## *2020 Return to Learn*

### **On-site Saliva Testing for All Minnesota School Staff In-Person or Hybrid Learning**

Regular testing is one of many critical strategies for controlling the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and supporting our frontline workers in schools. As Governor Walz continues to prioritize in-person learning while protecting the health and safety of students, staff and families, we know that increasing our capacity to test school staff is important.

Governor Walz has asked the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Health to update the Safe Learning Plan, directing all Minnesota public schools who are providing in-person learning (whether as part of an in person or hybrid learning model) to offer testing for all on-site staff every two weeks beginning January 4, 2021, or whenever they return to in-person learning after that date.

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The State of Minnesota will supply schools with the training and test kits they need to conduct testing every other week. Minnesota's nonpublic and tribal schools will also have access to testing supplies if they choose to offer tests to their staff. The length of this program is contingent on funding.

In order to manage capacity of testing labs, each school will be assigned a designated day to conduct testing. School COVID-19 coordinators will be trained to oversee staffs' use of self-administered saliva tests for their school communities.

These tests will be conducted in-person and will not use the same online format as the at-home saliva tests that schools were provided at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.