

*June 5, 2020*

Dear School Leaders:

COVID-19 continues to present an unprecedented challenge to our state. In the beginning, Governor Walz told Minnesotans we weren't ready to fight this virus. We told you that we needed time, and we asked you to stay home to build capacity. Those sacrifices have saved the lives of thousands of Minnesotans. We've successfully pushed out the peak of this virus, and we've made great progress to ensure we can treat Minnesotans who fall ill. With the capacity that we built while you stayed home, we can chart a new way forward. We can take a measured, Minnesota approach that protects public health and improves economic stability.

That's why today the Governor announced a turning of the dial to open up more of society across the state. The Stay Safe Order Phase III, which will begin on **June 10, 2020**, encourages Minnesotans to stay close to home but allows outdoor gatherings of friends and family of 25 people or less, and indoor gatherings of 10 people or less. Gatherings should adhere to proper social distancing measures—like staying six feet apart and wearing a mask.

**Phase III of the Stay Safe Order turns the dial further to open:**

- Restaurants and bars for indoor at 50 percent capacity, cannot exceed 250 people in a single self-contained space, with reservations required;
- Personal services like salons, tattoo parlors and barbershops at 50 percent capacity, cannot exceed 250 people in a single self-contained space, with appointments required;
- Gyms, personal fitness and yoga studios for both indoor at outdoor use at 25 percent capacity;
- Seated indoor entertainment like movies, concert halls, bowling, arcades, museums, and theaters at 25 percent capacity, cannot exceed 250 people in a single self-contained space;
- Pools at 50 percent capacity and maintain social distancing; and
- Outdoor event and entertainments settings, like sporting events, concerts, and theaters, may open at 25 percent capacity with an overall occupancy maximum capacity of 250 people in a single self-contained space, and must continue to follow social distancing guidelines, maintain social distancing, and strongly recommend masks be worn.

As school leaders, you may be wondering how this announcement would impact your school buildings. As long as your school communities can comply with the [public health guidance](#) for each of the different categories, you may also implement those actions in your school buildings and outdoor facilities. These changes will also be reflected in our summer programming guidance.

As the Governor reiterated when he gave this message to Minnesotans: This is about trust. It's about trusting every Minnesotan to take responsibility to keep themselves and their neighbors safe. It's more important than ever that we each do our part—and trust and rely on each other. We thank everyone who has made great sacrifices to keep their neighbors and communities safe, and we hope today's announcement provides some relief.

Together,

Mary Cathryn Ricker, NBCT  
Commissioner of Education