

# Education Leaders Call



**Kathy Hoffman**  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

March 10, 2021

# Welcome



# Agenda for Today

## **Revised ADHS Guidance:**

- ✓ Stephanie Martinez, ADHS

## **Public Health Expert Panel:**

- ✓ Erica Shaw and Mike Oxtoby, **Coconino** County Health
- ✓ Peggy Stemler, **Maricopa** County Health
- ✓ Brian Eller, **Pima** County Health

## **EO Clarifications:**

- ✓ Kate Wright, ADE



# ADHS Revised Guidance

## COVID-19 School Benchmarks

### Community Transmission By Arizona County

This guidance outlines recommendations for K-12 schools to prepare for and respond to community spread of COVID-19 based on CDC's K-12 [Operational Strategy](#) and [Indicators for Dynamic School Decision Making](#), and Arizona Department of Education's [Roadmap to Reopening Schools](#). LEAs are encouraged to continue to partner with their [local health department](#).

County	Case Rate	% Positivity	Transmission Level
Apache	Substantial	Low	Substantial
Cochise	Substantial	Moderate	Substantial
Coconino	High	Low	High
Gila	Substantial	Moderate	Substantial
Graham	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Greenlee	Substantial	Moderate	Substantial
La Paz	Substantial	Low	Substantial
Maricopa	Substantial	Moderate	Substantial
Mohave	Substantial	Substantial	Substantial
Navajo	High	Low	High
Pima	Substantial	Low	Substantial
Pinal	High	Moderate	High
Santa Cruz	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Yavapai	Substantial	Moderate	Substantial
Yuma	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

For additional information & the schools dashboard, visit [azhealth.gov/schoolsCOVID19](https://azhealth.gov/schoolsCOVID19).

Updated: 3/3/2021

## COVID-19 School Benchmarks

### Indicators & Learning Delivery Recommendations

#### Community Transmission to Reflect Level of Community Risk

The first step in determining when and how to safely reopen schools involves assessing community transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC recommends the use of two measures of community burden to determine the level of community transmission. These measures are used to assess the incidence and spread of COVID-19 in the community, not the school itself. Risk is dependent on community level transmission **and** implementation of school and community mitigation strategies.

Indicator	Low Transmission	Moderate Transmission	Substantial Transmission	High Transmission
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the last 7 days	0 - 9	10 - 49	50 - 99	≥ 100
Percentage of nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) that are positive during the past 7 days	<5.0%	5.0% - 7.9%	8.0% - 9.9%	≥ 10.0%

#### Recommended Implementation of Mitigation Strategies and K-12 School Learning Modes by Level of Community Transmission

Low Transmission	Moderate Transmission	Substantial Transmission	High Transmission
K-12 schools open for full in-person instruction	Elementary schools in hybrid learning mode or reduced attendance		
	Middle and high schools in hybrid learning mode or reduced attendance	Middle and high schools in virtual instruction unless they can strictly implement all mitigation strategies and have few cases.	
Schools that are already open for in-person instruction with successfully implemented mitigation strategies can remain open, but only if they continue to strictly implement mitigation strategies and have few cases			

For detailed mitigation strategies and remarks see the K-12 School Guidance for COVID-19.

For additional information & the schools dashboard, visit [azhealth.gov/schoolsCOVID19](https://azhealth.gov/schoolsCOVID19).

Updated: 3/3/2021



# Public Health Experts

**What are some of the most important public health considerations for schools when planning to open for in-person learning?**



# Public Health Experts

**What are best practices in mitigation that you have observed in schools over the past several months?**



# Public Health Experts

**How do you advise schools around the social distancing requirements of 6 feet, per CDC Guidance?**



# Public Health Feedback- Yuma

**What are best practices in mitigation that you have observed in schools over the past several months?**

**Students have been great at wearing masks. Much better than I imagined they would be. Masks have been the easiest to implement.**





# Public Health Feedback- Yuma

What are creative ways you are encouraging LEAs to layer mitigation?

We have implemented social distancing in the cafeteria that I think we will keep beyond the pandemic. Putting fewer students to a table and spreading them out facing one direction has drastically helped.

We have noticed that young students will talk to anyone who sits near them, it does not necessarily have to be their "friend". So, separating them has worked to eliminate excessive behavior but has still allowed a more controlled socialization.

We have also allowed our jr high students to eat outside under the shade. This has worked very well.



# Public Health Feedback- Yuma

What are some of the most important public health considerations for schools when planning to open for in-person learning?

I have found that as leaders we must be flexible and open minded. Some things that I thought would never work (such as keeping masks on young children) have been the easiest.

For our situation, masks and cleaning seem to have been our greatest tool.

Social distancing is important, but it is our greatest challenge. It is difficult to keep very young kids distanced while in a line or in social settings, it is challenging for them to know personal space.



# Public Health Feedback- Yuma

What are some of the most important public health considerations for schools when planning to open for in-person learning? (continued)

Also, we know that great instruction includes group work. In the younger grades, it is especially important to do guided reading in small groups.

To have a class full of children and expect that they will sit in rows behind a shield for six hours a day, day after day, is unrealistic.

As a leader, I believe it is important that we are transparent to our parents and community of what we are and are not implementing.



# Public Health Feedback- Yuma

## Communication-

Our District organized a Committee of Department Leaders. Each Department had their role of gathering information, evaluating all information, and designing in sections a guide for Return To Learning for Students/Parents, and Staff. We have a Communication Coordinator who was very successful in delivering and keeping our Parents and Staff informed and updated, which was one of our Districts top priorities.



# Public Health Feedback- Yuma

## Collaboration-

Our District was fortunate to have Ryan Butcher and Diana Gomez in assisting our District in guiding us through what our District may need, access to PPE, Rapid Test Kits, Training, what the requirements of Contract Tracing, understanding CDC and ADE guidelines, and assisting our Communities Schools Staff in being vaccinated. This collaboration started at least by June 2020, and continues to date.



# Public Health Feedback- Yuma

## Plan –

Once a Plan was developed, our Superintendent presented to the Board of Education members detailed information and recommendations of how to progress with school openings, closings, types of learning environments for students, and requirements of following CDC and ADE protocols for symptomatic and positive cases of COVID.

Our District had this Plan in place by August 2020. I believe by being prepared, informed, and following protocols that were developed for our District by August 2020, assisted us in the mitigation plan to return to our schools reopening by March 8, 2021 for all students.



# Public Health Feedback- Yuma

## **Most important public health considerations:**

**Having precise protocols that are followed by District Staff, Students, and Parents.**

**Having Rapid testing available in our schools. A very powerful tool to keep absences low for both staff and students. Otherwise, we were closing classrooms, sending students and staff home for at least 10 days.**



# EO Clarification

**Schools are to begin providing access to in-person instruction starting:**

- **The first Monday following the LEA scheduled Spring Break**

**OR**

- **March 15<sup>th</sup>, if there is no LEA scheduled Spring Break**





# EO Clarification

## Examples:

- **LEA Spring Break is 3/8 – 3/12:**
  - In-person instruction begins on 3/15/21
- **LEA Spring Break is 3/15 – 3/19:**
  - In-person instruction begins on 3/22
- **LEA does NOT have a scheduled Spring Break:**
  - In-person instruction begins on 3/15/21

