



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

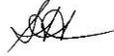
GRETCHEN WHITMER
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MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 13, 2021

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors
Nonpublic School Administrators

FROM: Sheila A. Alles, Chief Deputy Superintendent 

SUBJECT: Updated K-12 School Opening Guidance - MEMO #COVID-19-149

New guidance has been issued by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) with support from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE); the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA); and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for schools to keep students, staff, and communities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic while providing the in-person instruction that is crucial to learning and development.

The [guidance](#) can be found on the state's [K-12 School Opening Guidance](#) webpage. It emphasizes use of scientifically proven methods of reducing the risk of COVID-19 spread, including mask wearing, ventilation improvements, frequent hand washing, and social distancing. The state's goal in issuing this guidance is to have all Michigan school districts both traditional public and public school academies offer an in-person learning option for students no later than March 1, and earlier if possible. This guidance will help get teachers, students, and other staff members safely back in school and engaged in learning that has been disrupted during the past ten months.

The infection control measures in the new guidance include:

- When feasible, assigning children to cohort groups and limiting their interactions to their cohorts to reduce the number of contacts.
- Keeping individuals six feet from one another to the extent feasible, with creative use of school spaces to facilitate distancing.
- Providing adequate hand sanitizing supplies and reinforcing proper handwashing techniques.
- Improving air ventilation.
- Having staff and students conduct self-screenings for symptoms at home every day before going to school.
- Ensuring school plans are in place in coordination with local health departments if there are any positive COVID-19 tests.

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- Having staff and students who either test positive or are in close contact with those who test positive follow the [guidance issued by MDHHS](#) as well as local health departments. Anyone who is considered a close contact of someone who tests positive but does not have symptoms should quarantine for 10 days under CDC guidance.

The guidance applies to grades pre-kindergarten through 12 and includes early childhood education, such as Head Start and the Great Start Readiness Program.

All stakeholders working together at the local level—teachers, support staff, administrators, board members, health professionals, and community members—to make sure there is a safe and solid plan to return to in-person learning is essential to having a successful transition.

Additional resources for school opening can be found on the state's [K-12 School Opening Guidance](#) webpage.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Director