



Department of Public Health

School Re-opening Thresholds for school year 2020-2021

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The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) is committed to providing public health support to all school districts, public and private, and to all unincorporated schools in El Paso County, in addition to providing guidance for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year as in-person instruction starts after September 8, 2020.

While there is not a single parameter, that with high degree of certainty could tell the right time to safely return to school for in-person instruction, few indicators will shed some light as how the pandemic is evolving in our community.

The following parameters are objective indications of how fast the pandemic is spreading in the community and may serve as official guide for ISDs to request waivers through the Texas Education Agency for the continuation of proper funding for school activities:

- 7-day Rolling Average Cases Per Capita: Less than 25 cases per 100,000
- Testing Positivity Rate by CDC Week: Less than 7.5%
- 14-day Steady Decline in the 7-day rolling average of positive cases

While these three indicators do not provide a complete picture of the COVID-19 situation in El Paso County, it is important to emphasize that declining numbers on the parameters aforementioned provide an objective way to determine that the pandemic is not worsening in our community and that it is safe to bring our children back to school for in-person instruction.

More evidence-based guidance and recommendations will be provided as they become available. Rest assured that the DPH will stand by its commitment to preserve health by partnering with institutions like yours.

Respectfully,

Hector I. Ocaranza, MD, MPH, FAAP
Health Authority City and County of El Paso, TX

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