

Summary of Changes:

Updated Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools (4/9/21)

- Schools/districts may choose to reduce physical distancing to no less than three feet between students during academic instruction, however:
 - Schools/districts must follow CDC recommendations for physical distancing depending upon community transmission rates and grade levels.
 - Schools must adhere to the exceptions where a minimum of six feet of distance must be maintained including:
- Six feet is always the required distancing between adults (teachers, staff, visitors) and between students and adults.
- Six feet of distance is required when eating meals or snacks, or drinking, or other times masks must be removed. This may mean that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been converted to three feet of physical distance during instruction time.
- Individuals participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g., singing) or playing a wind instrument must be six feet apart and there must be six feet of distance between the performers and the audience during performances and concerts.
- Six feet of physical distance must be maintained in common areas and outside of classrooms (e.g. lobbies, auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and hallways), where possible.
- For guidance on sports, please refer to the [Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency \(February 23, 2021\)](#).
- All schools/districts must have a mandatory face mask policy.
- Additional guidance on ventilation and filtration is provided including recommendations for both classrooms that have mechanical ventilation and those that do not.
- Physical barriers are no longer recommended by CDC.
- Schools/districts should, at a minimum, follow CDC recommendations on testing in schools. Schools/districts moving to physical distancing of less than six feet should strongly consider implementing screening testing protocols to ensure monitoring.
- Indicators: Due to evidence that transmission risk ranges by the age of the student, the CDC recommends that physical distancing requirements differ by grade level and community transmission risk. CDC has developed four levels of indicators and thresholds for community transmission of COVID-19. Please refer to *Table 2* in the [CDC guidance](#) for more detail.
- The NYS Department of Health does not review or approve revisions to school reopening plans, which have been previously approved.
- Modified plans must be posted online and opportunity for community input and feedback must be provided. Final modified plans must be shared with Local Health Departments and the State Education Department.

Thank you,
The Education Constituents Team