



Update from the COVID-19 Working Group and Department of Health Dr. Ralston & Dr. Hadley

March 1, 2021



Current COVID Update



PDE's Current School Model Recommendations Based on Level of Community Transmission

Transmission Level	Cases Per 100K Individuals Over the Most Recent 7 Days	Percent Positivity Rate Over the Most Recent 7 Days	School Model Recommendations
Low	0-9	< 5%	Full In-Person or Blended
Moderate	10-99	5 - 9.9%	Blended or Full Remote
Substantial	≥ 100	≥10%	Blended for Elementary Only or Full Remote



CDC Indicators & Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19

Released February 12, 2021

Transmission Level	Cases Per 100K Individuals Over the Most Recent 7 Days	Percent Positivity Rate Over the Most Recent 7 Days
Low	0-9	< 5%
Moderate	10-49	5-7.9%
Substantial	50-99	8-9.9%
High	≥ 100	≥ 10%

NOTE: Per the [CDC](#) - Transmission level is determined by both the **Cases Per 100K** and the **Percent Positivity Rate** falling in a level. If the two indicators suggest different levels, the actions corresponding to the higher threshold should be chosen.



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

Transmission Level	Recommended School Operational Model
Low	Full In-Person with All 5 Mitigation Strategies In Place <i>Physical Distancing of 6ft or More to the Extent Possible</i>
Moderate	Full In-Person with All 5 Mitigation Strategies In Place <i>Physical Distancing of 6ft or More to the Extent Possible</i>
Substantial	Hybrid Model with All 5 Mitigation Strategies in Place <i>Physical Distancing of 6ft or More is Required</i>
High	Elementary Hybrid with All 5 Mitigation Strategies in Place MS/HS Virtual Instruction Recommended; However, May Remain Open if Mitigation Measures in Place <i>Physical Distancing of 6ft or More is Required</i>



CDC's 5 Key Mitigation Strategies

Regardless of community transmission level, the CDC states that schools must use a layered mitigation strategy by implementing the following 5 Key Mitigation Strategies.

1. Universal and Correct Use of Masks (required)
2. Physical Distancing of 6 ft or More (required in substantial and high)
3. Handwashing and Proper Respiratory Etiquette
4. Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities
5. Contact Tracing in Combination with Quarantine and Isolation



Current Avonworth School District/Allegh Co. Transmission Level Per Updated CDC Guidance

Criteria	1/29/21	2/5/21	2/12/21	2/19/21	2/26/21
Incidence Rate Per 100K	166.0	138.5	109.3	89.5	98.7
PCR Percent Positivity	7.8%	6.8%	6%	5.5%	5.9%

- Avonworth School District/Allegh. Co. has been in the **MODERATE Transmission Level** (per PDE guidance) for the last two weeks.
- This would place us in the **SUBSTANTIAL LEVEL** in the new CDC guidance.



Positive Cases and Attendance Restriction in Avonworth School District

COVID Data as of Monday, March 1, 2021

School Building	APC	AES	MS/HS
Active Cases	2	1	1
Total Cases	2	2	4

- *Active Cases* remain active during the 10-day isolation period
- Total Attendance Restriction = **23**
 - **Attendance Restriction** - individuals that are either positive for COVID or identified as a close contact to a person positive for COVID and therefore restricted from attending until the required quarantine/isolation period is complete.



Update on Recent Changes

K-3 Update

- 7 teachers hired on January 25 to bring back K-3 for full-day in-person instruction
- Teachers participated in professional development during a two-week onboarding period from February 1 - 15
- K-3 full-day in-person instruction began February 16
 - Smooth transition; Positive feedback from students/parents/teachers
 - In-person intervention has restarted
 - In-person specials are going well
 - Maximizing use of all spaces to maintain 6 ft of distance
 - 3rd grade lunches spread over three periods to allow for 6 ft of distance
 - APC gym used for lunch to allow for 6 ft of distance



Update on Recent Changes

4-6 Update

- 2 teachers hired to provide synchronous instruction in the hybrid model
 - One grade 4 teacher; One grade 5 teacher
 - Science and Social Studies Instruction
- Teachers participated in professional development during a two-week onboarding period from February 1 - 15
- Teachers started delivering instruction on February 16
- Grade 6
 - Uses large spaces to distance (LGI, Gym, Library)



Current Challenges for Additional Changes While Maintaining 6 ft Distancing

- **Space**

- Large spaces in use at AES (LGI, Gym, Library)
 - Limits lunch to cafeteria at this time (49 students at a time to allow for 6 ft distance)
 - 3rd grade - 3 lunch periods currently

- **Staffing**

- To maintain 6 ft distance, additional teachers would need to be hired for grade 4-6 classrooms
- Limited number of applicants



Department of Health &
COVID-19 Working Group Update



Department of Health Update

- **Vaccines**

- No clear timeline for educators to receive vaccinations
 - Hopeful to see an increase in rollout with new vaccines approved
- Emergence of COVID variants

- **COVID Cases in Schools**

- Cases of COVID-19 in students has been increasing recently
- The month of February has been the highest # of COVID cases in students this school year



ASD COVID-19 Working Group Update

Input from Dr. Freeman & Dr. Rottinghaus

Mitigation: 6ft distancing, masking, handwashing, and cleaning routines remain the best mitigation strategies

- No data exists on how risk increases when distancing is less than 6ft
- ***Moving to less than 6ft?***
 - Risk/Benefit needs to be considered (Dr. R)
 - Not until MUCH less transmission in the community (Dr. F)
- Two masks aren't necessarily better
- Mental health considerations

Vaccines: Hopeful that new approvals will speed up the vaccination process; Get whichever vaccine you can whenever you can.

Optimism: Both doctors are optimistic about the outlook for summer and fall.



ASD COVID-19 Working Group Update

Factors to Consider

- **Vaccinations**

- School personnel receiving vaccinations will make returning to full in-person more attainable

- **Mental Health**

- We are seeing an increase in the number of students referred to the Student Assistance Program and in need of support

- **School Engagement**

- Some students are becoming disengaged from school



ASD COVID-19 Working Group Update

Factors to Consider

- **Space**

- Large spaces in use already
- More lunch periods needed to allow for 6 ft distancing
 - Eating creates the most vulnerable time for spread as masks are removed

- **Staffing**

- Quarantine of staff creates challenges for operating classrooms/buildings
- Pool of available and quality teaching candidates does not exist
- Building substitutes are challenging to come by (APC has 1; AES has 0)

- **Moving to less than 6 ft Distancing**

- More individuals will need to quarantine with each positive case
- May create more building closures and the need to move back-and-forth from in-person to remote learning



ASD COVID-19 Working Group Update

Factors to Consider

- **Returning 4-6 with NO 6ft Distancing; Students will be 3 ft or less in classrooms**
 - Increase in the number of students on the bus
 - Specials will remain in the classroom
 - Recess space broken into designated areas per class to maintain pod
 - Maintaining 6 ft at lunch
 - Cafeteria can hold 49 students at 6 ft
 - 6th grade would be moved from the gym and can handle 70 students at 6 ft
 - Lunches would run 10:45-1:30



ASD COVID-19 Working Group Update

Factors to Consider

- **Returning 7-8 with NO 6 ft Distancing; Students will be 3 ft or less in classrooms**
 - Increase in the number of students on the bus
 - Students pod by classes
 - Students still move from class to class (no stopping at lockers)
 - Lunch tables marked at 6 ft (2 to a table)
 - Additional space utilized to maintain 6 ft at lunch



ASD COVID-19 Working Group Update

Factors to Consider

- **Returning 9-12 with NO 6 ft Distancing; Students will be 3 ft or less in classrooms**
 - Increase in the number of students on the bus
 - Students cannot pod
 - Students move from class to class
 - Lunch tables marked at 6 ft (2 to a table)
 - Additional space utilized to maintain 6 ft



Additional Steps Recommended by Administration

- **Transition asynchronous Wednesday to an in-person day of instruction for grades 7-12 beginning the week of April 5**

*Possible example of a 5-day hybrid without an asynchronous Wednesday

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A	Group A	Group A	Group B	Group B
Group A	Group A	Group B	Group B	Group B

- **Consideration of seniors beginning full in-person instruction the week of March 22 (4-day weeks until after spring break; 5-day weeks in last qrtr.)**
 - Largest classes shift to larger spaces
 - Some classes may require seniors to attend remotely from another space
 - Most classes will not be impacted as enrollment will allow for 6ft