



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: January 14, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Interim Guidance for PreK-12 School Reopening**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) are announcing the release of new guidance to inform decisions about school reopening in 2021. The [Interim Guidance for PreK-12 School Reopening](#) consolidates, replaces and updates previous guidance issued by the VDOE and VDH. The guidance is accompanied by a [letter from Dr. James Lane, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Dr. Norman Oliver, State Health Commissioner](#).

VDH and VDOE continue to recommend that schools use the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making framework together with the Interim Guidance to assess the risk of introduction and transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in schools, to help inform decisions about school operations, and to implement necessary mitigation strategies.

A school division's capacity to successfully implement mitigation strategies and local community disease data should be factored into school operations plans. The three CDC core indicators serve as a starting point to make determinations on what to do in a school or division but should not solely dictate the decisions that school divisions make to best serve their communities. As local school and health leaders evaluate and adjust instructional offerings in 2021, they must carefully balance the risks associated with operating during a pandemic and the long-term effects of students not attending school in person.

The Virginia Department of Education is committed continuing to provide timely, reliable and factual information about COVID-19 as school divisions navigate decisions about reopening and serving all students equitably. Updates about this guidance will be made to the [VDOE Interim Guidance for Reopening PreK-12 Schools web page](#) as needed.

Please direct all inquiries pertaining to the updated guidance to Holly Coy, Assistant Superintendent for Policy, Equity and Communications, at: holly.coy@doe.virginia.gov or 804-225- 2092.

JFL/HMC