

# SCHOOL REOPENING INFORMATION

Based on public health data around average daily hospitalizations, new COVID-19 cases, and percent of persons testing positive, the conditions for the start of school in Delaware fall under **Scenario 2**. This corresponds to a **hybrid model** of in-person and remote learning to start the year. Hybrid models of learning will look different in different districts and charters, depending on locally designed plans, developed with feedback from educators, staff, families, students, and community members. Each district and charter school is expected to **offer a remote option for families** as well. If a school district/charter determines it is not able to provide a hybrid model following the state's school reopening guidance, **it may begin the year fully remote (Scenario 3)**.

Minimal Community Spread School Buildings are Open for In-Person Instruction	Minimal-to-Moderate Community Spread Remote Learning/In-Person/Hybrid	Significant Community Spread School Buildings are Closed – Remote Learning Only
<b>Scenario</b> <b>1</b> <b>Minimal Community Spread</b> Few cases with minimal increases Low percent positive cases Low numbers of hospitalizations  Schools are open for in-person instruction	<b>Scenario</b> <b>2</b> <b>Minimal-to-Moderate Community Spread</b> Moderate levels of community spread Moderate percent of increased cases, percent positive and hospitalizations  Schools may use a hybrid model of remote learning and in-person learning options with precautions in place	<b>Scenario</b> <b>3</b> <b>Significant Community Spread</b> Significant increase in cases, percent positive and hospitalizations  School buildings are closed – remote learning only

# SCHOOL REOPENING CRITERIA

	Scenario 1: Minimal Spread	Scenario 2: Minimal-to-Moderate Spread	Scenario 3: Significant Spread
New Cases per 100,000	<10	10-100	>100
% Persons Testing Positive	<3%	3% to 10%	>10%
Avg. Daily Hospitalizations per 100,000	<10	10-25	>25
Overall Rating*	2+ Green	2+ Yellow	2+ Red

*\*If 1 of each color, % positive determines rating*

	New Cases (Per 100,000)	% Persons Positive	Avg. Daily Hospitalizations (Per 100,000)	Overall Rating
4/18/2020 - 4/24/2020	122.5	34.7	27.9	High
4/25/2020 - 5/1/2020	151.0	27.3	31.9	High
5/2/2020 - 5/8/2020	138.1	18.2	29.5	High
5/9/2020 - 5/15/2020	148.2	12.3	27.9	High
5/16/2020 - 5/22/2020	86.9	10.0	23.1	Medium
5/23/2020 - 5/29/2020	72.3	8.3	20.0	Medium
5/30/2020 - 6/5/2020	47.4	5.6	14.9	Medium
6/6/2020 - 6/12/2020	40.8	3.2	10.8	Medium
6/13/2020 - 6/19/2020	38.2	2.6	8.5	Low
6/20/2020 - 6/26/2020	52.8	4.2	8.8	Medium
6/27/2020 - 7/3/2020	84.6	5.2	6.7	Medium
7/4/2020 - 7/10/2020	75.1	5.4	6.0	Medium
7/11/2020 - 7/17/2020	70.3	4.2	5.3	Medium
7/18/2020 - 7/24/2020	70.9	4.3	5.7	Medium
7/25/2020 - 7/31/2020	70.0	4.3	6.0	Medium

# SCHOOL REOPENING FAQs

## **What is the decision regarding school reopening?**

Public health data indicates Delaware schools may reopen in Scenario 2. Scenario 2 is a hybrid model of both in-person and remote learning. There are a variety of hybrid models and therefore models will look different in each district and charter. For example, hybrid models may include in-person instruction and/or remote learning by age group (i.e. elementary in-person, secondary remote), students attending on alternating day(s), or in-person or remote attendance focused on specific student needs. All schools are expected to offer families a fully remote option.

## **Can a school open in a different scenario?**

A district or charter may not operate in a scenario that is less restrictive than the state's recommended scenario, which is based on public health guidance. A district or charter may choose to open in a more restrictive scenario if they cannot meet the required health guidelines. For example, based on present data, the state has determined that conditions dictate Scenario 2, which is a hybrid model. A district or charter could open in Scenario 3, which is full remote learning, but could not open in Scenario 1. That said, districts and charters are encouraged to offer some amount of in-person instruction, particularly for students who may have difficulty in a fully remote environment or setting.

## **What does a hybrid scenario mean?**

As indicated above, hybrid scenarios may look different across the state. Just a few of the examples of hybrid learning include:

- In-person instruction and/or remote learning by age group (i.e. elementary in-person, secondary remote), but as discussed above, all schools should offer families a fully remote option.
- Students attending on alternating day(s).
- In-person or remote attendance focused on specific student needs (bringing in students with special needs, low-income students, English learners, students experiencing homelessness).

## **Will COVID-19 testing be made available to staff and students?**

Yes. The state will provide an at home test option to each school so all staff can get tested prior to returning to school. Staff will register, and a test will be mailed to the home address. After the test has been taken, it should be returned in the pre-paid package. Once school starts, the state will provide testing for staff once per month. In the two weeks prior to schools returning in person, the state will be setting up a series of community testing sites in school parking lots around the state specifically geared towards student testing. Parents/guardians are encouraged to bring their children to get tested. The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) will work with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) for schools with a high percentage of families who have transportation challenges to locate testing sites to allow for more accessibility for students. Community testing sites will continue to be available throughout the school year for parents who wish to have their children tested on a regular basis. The state will also facilitate testing for any staff or student who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

The state also continues to provide free testing throughout the state, including drive through testing. More information on this testing can be found [here](#).

**What happens if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 during the school year?**

This [FAQ document](#) outlines the process for responding to positive COVID-19 tests. Facial coverings, hand washing, social distancing, and regular cleaning are the best way to prevent positive cases and the spread of the disease.

**What is the process for moving between scenarios?**

The three scenarios are determined by public health data. The Division of Public Health (DPH) will review the data weekly to anticipate trends and give schools as much time as possible to adapt to changing conditions. Schools won't have to react on a weekly basis. If a steady trend occurs in a positive direction, or data trends in a negative direction, the state will consider changing the statewide scenario. The state will work collaboratively with districts and charters so they are prepared for any change.

**Is it possible that there will be regional variability?**

Yes, but such variability is not recommended at this time. Regional variability will be considered when conditions change. It is possible that a district or charter may have to revert to remote learning if an outbreak in a certain area of the state occurs. Regional data variability may dictate that certain counties or districts/charters operate under different criteria.

**How will schools meet the behavioral/mental health needs of students, families, and staff?**

Students, families, and staff benefit from behavioral/mental health services provided by schools. Behavioral/mental health staff, wellness centers, and outside organizations play a vital role in this support. Whether remote or in-person, schools will work with students, families, and staff to provide access to critical behavioral/mental health services. Regardless of the scenario, schools should make behavioral/mental health staff, wellness centers, and outside organization support available to help meet the needs of students, staff, and families.

**How will the state support districts and charters to meet the health and safety guidance?**

Each district and charter has an assigned DPH liaison who is available to support it in meeting the state's guidance. These relationships will help schools meet the necessary guidelines to keep staff and students safe. These DPH liaisons will play an informational and support role, not an enforcement role. If someone is concerned about a school not following guidance, these concerns should be addressed immediately with either the school or district. Reports can also be made to the DPH enforcement email ([hspcontact@delaware.gov](mailto:hspcontact@delaware.gov)).

**Can parents and students opt out of physically going into the school?**

When districts and charters create their hybrid plans, they will include an option for families who choose to keep their children home for health and safety reasons. A student will not be forced to attend in-person school if he or she has a health condition or does not feel safe, and parents/caregivers will have the ability to opt for remote learning for their child.

**Will fall sports still be happening?**

Now that the state has identified the scenario in which school will start, the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) will make a final determination on what that means for fall sports. DPH has [issued guidelines](#) to be followed for sports.

**What are the child care options for families if their district or charter is doing remote learning, and their children do not have a place to go during the day?**

Districts and charters should work with local child care facilities, non-profits, and other existing programs to try to ensure a place for any child who needs it. DDOE will provide each superintendent and charter leader with a list of such facilities in their geographic area and help make needed connections as well.

**Will educators have to use sick leave if they must quarantine/self-isolate due to COVID-19?**

The state is in the process of working with districts and charter schools with the aim that educators won't have to use their personal sick leave if self-isolation or quarantine is required. At a minimum, teachers are entitled to two weeks of federal leave if they must self-isolate or quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19 or feeling symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis. Staff may also be required to provide medical documentation of the requirement to be absent from work. Districts and charters are urged to strongly consider the disability status of employees who are at higher risk of complications related to COVID-19 infection, including whether such employees are entitled to reasonable accommodations under the ADA. Further details will be provided once final decisions are made.

**What funding is there to help districts and charter schools?**

Districts and charter schools received \$39.1 million from the federal CARES Act to deal with COVID-related challenges. Additionally, the state used its share of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funds (\$7.9 million) and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (\$4.3 million) to support K-12 schools through flexible funding, mental health support, reading support, connectivity, and trainings. As of the time of this publication, Congress is working on an additional relief package, which may include more funding for schools. Districts and charters may choose to rethink their Opportunity Funding provided by the state to better support low-income students and English learners during this unprecedented time.

**Where do I direct questions about my district's or charter school's plans?**

District superintendents, charter school leaders, and their teams are working through their plans, which once finished, will be on file with the district or charter. Many districts and charters have working groups that include educators, parents, and community members. Local school boards and charter boards should also be engaged in this process. Districts and charter schools should be contacted directly. Beyond that, the DDOE is always ready and willing to [assist](#).