



NEWS RELEASE

3/16/21

Contact: Julie Popper, SEA Media Relations
206-445-8507 c
jpopper@washingtonea.org

Tim Robinson, SPS Lead Media Relations Specialist
206-465-5404 c
tirobinson@seattleschools.org
[SPS Newsroom](#)

SEA, SPS Reach Tentative Agreement on Safe Return to School Buildings

SEATTLE – Throughout our joint response to the pandemic, the well-being of our students has always come first. On Tuesday March 16, Seattle Public Schools and the Seattle Education Association came to a tentative agreement that facilitates the safe return to school buildings for preschool and elementary students and staff. The agreement focuses on creating safe learning environments and supports special education inclusion by keeping students with IEPs in class with their general education peers. This tentative agreement is being brought to the SEA membership to be ratified and to the SPS Board of Directors for approval next week.

“We look forward to welcoming our students back in larger numbers. I am grateful to our bargaining teams for putting in very long hours to create a plan that will offer more access for our students to return to in-person learning,” said Superintendent Denise Juneau.

The tentative agreement includes our joint commitment to bring all pre-kindergarten and elementary special education intensive services pathways students back into classrooms first on March 29. SEA and SPS recognize the unique challenges that remote learning has presented these students. All other elementary students whose families choose the in-person instructional model and secondary special education intensive pathway students will start on April 5.

“SEA remains committed to the health, safety, and equity of educators. This bargaining experience brings us one step closer to correcting the systemic inequities in our school system and walking into better schooling environments,” said Uti Hawkins, SEA Vice-President.

Throughout bargaining the teams focused on meeting the needs of our entire school community, whether in-person or remote. Additionally, to allow students more days of in-person interaction with classmates, the parties agreed on a hybrid (in-person part-time and remote part-time) instructional model where students would attend either morning or afternoon in-person class four days a week, with remote teaching and learning on Wednesdays. All Families will also have the option of a 100% remote model.

“Throughout the district’s response to the pandemic, the Board has worked to center students with the highest needs in our decision making. I am thankful that this tentative agreement supports these efforts by returning all preschool and elementary students enrolled in Intensive Service Pathways first. I look forward to welcoming more students back to our physical classrooms,” said Board President Chandra Hampson.

Kindergarten to 5th grade families will receive an Intent to Enroll Survey later this week and an opportunity to select the in-person instructional model or 100% remote.

Once the organizations ratify the tentative agreement next week, more details will be available.

Bargaining continues as SEA and SPS now focus on coming to an agreement to bring middle and high school students back to classrooms.

###

For more information about **Seattle Public Schools**: [SPS webpage](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#)