



NEWS RELEASE

3/05/21

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[SPS Newsroom](#)

SPS Schools Ready to Welcome Students Next Week

New school safety monitoring tools on SPS Website

SEATTLE – Seattle Public Schools is committed to serving our students and providing the best education possible. Right now, the key to best serving our students is to resume in-person instruction on March 11 for preschool students and students in special education intensive service pathways.

As we return our most vulnerable and youngest students to classrooms, we will continue to prioritize their safety and the safety and well-being of our staff.

NEW WEB TOOLS TO KEEP YOU INFORMED

SPS is also committed to full transparency about the health and safety measures in place and the readiness of our school buildings.

We urge all families, staff and the public to stay informed by checking the [SPS School Readiness Charts](#) and the [SPS COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

SPS School Readiness Charts provide an overview of key building safety components at every school building:

- Classroom set-up
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Health screening kiosks
- HVAC systems
 - * Ventilation standards
 - * CO2 airflow
 - * Supplemental HEPA systems

- Transportation
- School Readiness Charts updated weekly

SPS COVID-19 Dashboard will track any confirmed COVID-19 cases at Seattle Public Schools.

- Disaggregates data into parts
- By region
- By week
- By role of person (i.e. “student” or “staff”)
- Refreshed each Monday

OUR BUILDINGS ARE READY

SPS staff have been working for several months to prepare our buildings for a return to in-person. Each building has been equipped with all necessary health and safety items (PPE), which are available at all schools and ready for student and staff return.

- All district health and safety protocols comply with Washington State Department of Health, Public Health - Seattle & King County, Washington State Labor & Industries, and federal CDC guidelines and recommendations. SPS nurses helped inform the district protocols and associated trainings, which were created by a working group of district staff.
- From reconfigured classrooms to mask and health check-in requirements, we’ve put in place measures that will help keep students and staff safe.
- These measures have already been in use by district staff in school buildings since last fall, and they are effective.
- We’ve worked with industry experts to determine and implement protocols that ensure appropriate air quality in every occupied classroom.

THE URGENCY TO RETURN TO CLASSROOMS

By prioritizing the return of those students for whom in-person learning is imperative, we are acting on our commitment to educational justice.

Educator and staff are working harder than ever, yet we know there is still a subset of students whose needs are not being met. In-person learning provides the most appropriate social and academic environments for our students, particularly for our students receiving special education services and our youngest learners. These students have been hardest hit by remote learning.

Many students in intensive pathways require a variety of supports, such as physical therapy, which are most often effective when provided in-person.

All families, but especially those historically marginalized and economically vulnerable, count on the partnership of SPS to provide safe, nurturing early learning spaces outside the home. This is more important than ever for our youngest learners, who are developmentally not ready to learn remotely.

We need to get our most vulnerable students back to in-person school so they can receive the essential academic, social-emotional, and mental health supports they urgently need.

Returning these students to in-person instruction is our legal, moral, and ethical responsibility.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year, SPS and the Seattle Education Association (SEA) reached agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding for working conditions pertaining to the upcoming school year. This MOU included the recognition that SPS can identify those needs that are determined to be “essential.”

At the Feb. 25 special school board meeting, the [board approved a resolution](#) directing SPS to prioritize students enrolled in Preschool and PreK-12 Special Education Intensive Service Pathways for the return to in-person as quickly as possible.

SPS is engaged in a two-track effort to resume in-person instruction:

- Returning special education intensive service pathways students and preschool students to in-person instruction beginning on March 11 because it has been determined it is essential to do so;
- Continuing to bargain with our partner the Seattle Education Association on the gradual increase of in-person instruction in the following priority order: K-1, 2-5 and small groups of students in 6-12 grade, while ensuring those with the highest needs return first.

For more information, please see the [SPS website](#).

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