

NEWS RELEASE

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Oregon Schools Plan for the 2022-23 School Year with Support from ODE and OHA

To maintain in-person learning for all public students, all day, every school day, ODE and OHA have released resources to support COVID-19 Management in Schools. The resources support local planning and decision-making, and center equity and mental health supports within a School-Level COVID-19 Management Plan.

(Salem, Ore.) – To maintain in-person learning for all public students next school year, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) have released resources to support COVID-19 Management in Schools.

Next year, public schools and programs will incorporate what they have learned from two years of managing COVID-19 in schools into locally developed, held and practiced communicable disease management plans. ODE/OHA joint guidance, known as Ready Schools, Safe Learners (RSSL) Resiliency Framework, remains accessible on ODE's website for schools to use as a reference and reminder of the tools and practices of the last two years. This design provides resources to support local decision-making and essential operational capacity to respond to changes in COVID-19 transmission and keep schools open and children learning from dedicated teachers and staff.

For the 2022–23 School Year

Every public school will have a locally developed [COVID-19 Management Plan](#). ODE, OHA and the Oregon School Nurses Association (OSNA) co-developed this [template](#), instructions and [tools](#) to help schools craft their plan. The template combines what schools already do locally and verifies they are ready to:

- Prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from increases in COVID-19 transmission.
- Ensure continuity of instruction for all students, regardless of support needs.
- Ensure continuity of learning during and after periods of increased COVID-19 transmission.
- Communicate their plan to staff, students, families, and community.

Schools will craft a plan designed to meet the needs of all students, and in particular those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Building on the lessons learned over the past two years, schools will develop plans closely tailored to the needs of their students. The template aids schools in their ongoing efforts to prioritize care, connection, and community and to support the mental, emotional, and social health and well-being of students, families, and staff.

Decision-making remains local. Maintaining decision-making at the local level allows school district leaders and local public health authorities to work together to respond to local COVID-

19 conditions. ODE and OHA will continue to monitor COVID-19 transmission and may take state action to protect the public's health and maintain capacity in Oregon's hospital systems.

We will move forward together, and continue to build on lessons learned. Over the last two years, Oregon school staff and administrators have focused both on protecting the health and safety of Oregon's students while also attending to their educational and academic needs. From the time the first known case of COVID-19 in Oregon was identified in connection to a school, the education community has balanced these two, equally-important goals. Through it all school leaders have cultivated new partnerships and networks within their community to problem-solve and serve students and their families. The knowledge gained about health and safety and the willingness to embrace new partnerships and continue to lean into difficult conversations will allow Oregon to rethink and renew an education system that supports every student, including students and families disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

"The Oregon Department of Education set a North Star: to provide equitable and inclusive access to full-time, in-person learning for every student, every school day. A critical way we do this is by implementing measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and other illnesses that may circulate in our community. Through the enormous challenges and losses of the COVID-19 pandemic, Oregon's school leaders have innovated, strengthened collaboration, and increased resilience to serve students and families across our state," said Colt Gill, Director of Oregon Department of Education. "Thank you for your efforts. While COVID-19 is a disease we will continue to live with and manage in schools in the year to come, our schools and our school communities are experienced and equipped to maintain operations while protecting health and safety."

With science-based planning and prevention strategies in place, schools can reduce the need for school exclusions and ensure that all students have access to a full school year. The School-level COVID-19 Management Plan is designed to align with other health, safety and operations plans schools and districts have in place and will assist in the development and ongoing improvement of key operational responses to COVID-19.

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