

Bend-La Pine Schools

Continuation of In-Person Instruction

2021-22

Executive Summary – Dr. Steven Cook
August 10, 2021

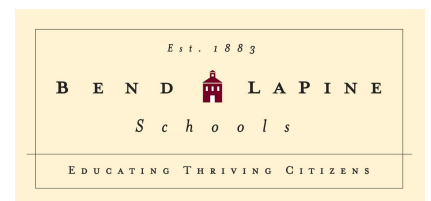


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Bend-La Pine Schools
Continuation of In-Person Instruction
2021-22 School Year

Executive Summary
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Re: Recommendations for 2021-2022 School Year Based on Ready Schools, Safe Learners Update

Date: August 10, 2021

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE), in collaboration with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), released the [Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework \(RSSLRf\) for the 2021-22 School Year](#) on August 2, 2021. The RSSL-RF states that school districts will make decisions with their boards to determine local implementation of COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Local Decision Making

In general, RSSL-RF states that decisions regarding school health and safety reside with school and district officials. Local Public Health Authorities (LPHAs) are vital partners to advise and consult on health and safety procedures. Except where compliance is mandated by existing state law, the Resiliency Framework is advisory. Where the framework does not require a specific action by a school district, a district may choose whether to consider or implement advisory information or recommendations.

Requirements in State Statute and Rule

Existing state law and rule include the following **requirements** for schools and districts:

Operational Plan: Schools and districts must periodically submit to ODE a plan for operation during the 2021-2022 school year. The plan is similar, but smaller in scale, to the Operational Blueprint. The plan should be informed by community engagement and posted on the school district website ([OAR 581-022-0105](#)).

Face Coverings Required Indoors, During the School Day: On August 2, 2021, the Oregon Health Authority implemented a new statewide rule ([OAR 333-019-1015](#)) requiring face coverings in all indoor school settings, both public and private, for all individuals two years and older, including all students, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors. (This applies to summer school programming.) OHA has committed to review this rule monthly.

Students able, but unwilling to wear a face covering indoors, during the school day, will be denied entry and provided a free public education through Bend-La Pine Schools Online.

COVID-19 Recovery Services: For students experiencing disabilities who are eligible for special education, Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) teams must consider the need for

individualized COVID-19 recovery services. This includes notifying parents, considering the need, and documenting decisions related to services at each initial IEP meeting or earlier, where appropriate (RSSL-RF, August 3, 2021).

Face Coverings Required on Public Transportation: The Centers for Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC) order for mandatory use of face coverings on public transit applies to school buses until lifted by the federal government and cannot be waived by state or local authorities (CDC, Issued 2/1/2021).

Additionally, schools and districts ***must***:

Maintain a Communicable Disease Management Plan ([OAR 581-022-2220](#)), exclude staff or students from school who have been exposed to COVID-19 ([OAR 333-019-0010](#)), maintain health care and space that isolates sick or injured students ([OAR 581-022-2320](#)), meet all standard instructional time requirements in Division 22 ([OAR-581-022-0102\(30\)](#)) and ([OAR 581-022-2320](#)), complete an independent adoption of any digital instructional materials used as core curriculum ([OAR 581-022-2350](#)), administer state assessments as required by state and federal law (**ORS 329.485**; [OAR 581-022-2100](#)), reinstate the 10-day drop rule for enrollment ([OAR 581-023-0006\(4\)](#)), attendance and reporting practices ([OAR 581-023-0006\(1\)\(f\)](#)) and notifications (**ORS 339.071**), and submit Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services plan to ODE ([OAR 581-022-0105](#)) by August 27, 2021 to fulfill the requirements of the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) State plan. Additional rules can be found in the RSSL-RF document.

Overview & Authority

Changes in the amount of community transmission of COVID-19, the severity of illness associated with new variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19, or the availability of vaccination for children younger than 12 years old may warrant changes to the state's recovery efforts during the school year. Bend-La Pine Schools' Operational Plan will be updated to reflect any changes.

Bend-La Pine Schools will continue to monitor guidance updates from the CDC, ODE, OHA, and DCPH to align this recommendation framework as needed.

Decisions about when or how Bend-La Pine Schools (BLS) will respond to an outbreak of COVID-19 involve collaboration across multiple partners. If part of or an entire school needs to close for in-person instruction as a matter of public health, it is important that educators, students, families and the general public have a clear understanding of how decisions are made and who makes those decisions.

When determining how to best support in-person learning during the 2021-22 school year, Bend-La Pine Schools will work in a collaborative manner with the Deschutes County Health

Services (DCHS) as the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA). DCHS is a vital partner in advising and consulting on health and safety concerns with Bend-La Pine Schools officials.

COVID-19 Health and Safety

As Bend-La Pine Schools plans for the 2021-22 in-person school year, it is important to remember that:

- Returning all students to full-time, in-person instruction is a priority.
- Our communities will be living with the virus until there is widespread immunity.
- COVID-19 continues to change with new variants, our knowledge of mitigation efforts grows over time. For these reasons the guidance for responding to COVID-19 also changes.
- Currently, the best practices as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Oregon Health Authority, and Deschutes County Health Services for protecting individuals from COVID-19 are vaccination for those eligible, physical distancing, face coverings, ventilation and airflow, hand hygiene, and staying home if ill or exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Opportunity for transmission decreases with each mitigation effort that is implemented.

As Bend-La Pine Schools plans and implements the recommendations included in the Resiliency Framework, the school district will necessarily need to consider a continuum of risk levels when all recommendations cannot be fully implemented.

District leadership will use Planning for COVID-19 Scenarios in Schools for COVID-19 as a guide for response to related illness events.

Equity

Bend-La Pine Schools is committed to promoting educational systems that support every child's identity, health and well-being, strengths and needs. Bend-La Pine Schools makes every effort to apply an equity-informed, anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens across all sections of this operational plan.

Bend-La Pine Schools remains committed to the guiding principles used throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to generate collective action and leadership for efforts to respond to COVID-19 across the school district and communities in Central Oregon. These principles are updated to reflect the current context and in conjunction with current strategic goals:

- **Ensure safety and wellness.** Prioritizing basic needs such as food, shelter, wellness, supportive relationships and support for mental, social and emotional health of students and staff. Bend-La Pine Schools' employs a Director of Social, Emotional Learning, and Mental Wellness; 25 student success educational assistants; 6 student success instructors; 31 student success clinician coordinators; a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with a team of over 40 language specialists and culturally-specific family liaisons; and 22 nurses to support mental, social, and emotional health of students and

staff, 14 Family Access Network advocates and 1 homeless liaison. Bend-La Pine Schools plans to continue to make free meals available to all students every school day and continue robust offerings of clubs, athletics and activities for students.

- **Center health and well-being.** Acknowledging the health and mental health impacts this past year, commit to creating learning opportunities that foster creative expression, make space for reflection and connection and center on the needs of the whole child rather than solely emphasizing academic achievement. In addition, we acknowledge the assets and strengths of our families, and the disparate impact this pandemic has had on different portions of our community. We strive to engage families actively as partners in this commitment.

Staff use Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) tools that give students the ability to identify and articulate their concerns, hear the concerns of others, and take each others' concerns into account in working toward mutually satisfactory solutions. Bullying prevention and emotional growth messaging is weaved throughout our instruction. Clubs are active in all of our schools, offering students opportunities for involvement in numerous groups including Where Everyone Belongs (WEB), Robotics and Uni-cycling – to name a few. Bend-La Pine Schools staffs schools in ways that ensure students have access to mental and behavioral health support at school: more than 30 counselors meet with students each day at our middle and high schools, 16 school psychologists provide student support and advocacy at all elementary, middle and high schools, two full-time therapists support our highest needs students at schools in the region.

- **Cultivate connection and relationship.** Reconnecting with one another after a year of separation can occur through quality learning experiences and deep interpersonal relationships among families, students and staff.
- **Prioritize equity.** Recognizing the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on our Black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) communities; students experiencing disabilities; students living in rural communities; and students and families navigating poverty and houselessness, the district will apply an equity informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lens to promote culturally sustaining and revitalizing educational systems that support every child.
- **Innovate.** Returning to school is an opportunity to improve teaching and learning by iterating on new instructional strategies, rethinking learning environments and investing in creative approaches to address unfinished learning.

Advisory Health & Safety Strategies

Key health and safety measures that have shifted from “required” to “advisory” and back to “required” for reducing the spread of COVID-19 in Bend-La Pine Schools were reviewed with a number of district stakeholder groups for input and comment throughout the pandemic. These groups included the Bend-La Pine Schools Executive Administrators and School Principals,

Bend-La Pine Schools District Safety Leadership Team, Bend-La Pine Schools District and School Safety Committees (staff and administrators), Bend Education Association (BEA) and Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) leaders.

Additional consultation and input was provided by the Deschutes County Health Services and local medical care providers.

Community input received via email, phone calls, during board meeting public comment and via Board Leadership Listening Sessions, has also informed our plan.

Bend-La Pine Schools

Continuation of In-Person Instruction, Fall 2021

Schools are an important part of the infrastructure of communities, as they provide safe and supportive learning environments for students, employ teachers and other staff, and enable parents, guardians, and caregivers to work. Many students, staff, and caregivers are either missing or have had interruptions in services due to school building closures and virtual and hybrid learning. Evidence suggests that many K–12 schools that have strictly implemented prevention strategies have been able to safely open for in-person instruction and remain open.

Bend-La Pine Schools has, and will continue to follow, [guidance](#) for prevention strategies to help protect students, teachers, and staff, and slow the spread of COVID-19. We believe that with these prevention strategies in place and adhered to, our schools can safely remain open for in-person instruction and we can fulfill our plan for students to attend school in-person, full time, five days a week for the entire school year, while being mindful of best practices for student and staff health and safety.

This document provides an operational strategy for safe delivery of in-person instruction in K–12 schools through the integration of a package of prevention and control components:

1. Consistent implementation of layered prevention strategies to reduce COVID-19 transmission in schools
2. Consideration of indicators of community transmission to reflect levels of community risk
3. Phased prevention strategies based on levels of community transmission

The following public health efforts provide additional layers of COVID-19 protection in schools:

- Testing to identify individuals with a COVID-19 infection to limit transmission and outbreaks
- Vaccination for teachers and staff as soon as possible

Initial public review of this plan will take place on August 10 at the Bend-La Pine Schools Board of Directors business meeting and will be reviewed, as needed, to mitigate COVID-19 spread and avoid school closures.

Appropriate accommodations for children	<p>Administrators should consider adaptations and alternatives to prevention strategies when serving people with disabilities and/or students with academic, social, and emotional needs that require intervention and support while maintaining efforts to protect all children and staff from COVID-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For students receiving special education services, decisions are informed according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).• Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan teams. <p>Staff will ensure student accommodations create access to the same consistent learning opportunities all students have.</p> <p>Staff will consider allowing students with disabilities or accommodations to continue in person instruction as daily routines and social interactions are key to meeting their individual learning needs.</p>
Attendance	<p>A student's academic performance and/or attendance during the spring of 2020 or the 2020-21 school year should not be the sole determinant for decision making.</p> <p>The 10-day drop rule will be reinstated and schools and districts must use the active and inactive roll as required under OAR 581-023-0006(4).</p>

Cleaning protocols	<p>District facilities will be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected daily using District sanctioned, <u>EPA List N</u> approved products for COVID-19.</p> <p>Health rooms and isolation rooms will be disinfected thoroughly by the custodial staff on a daily basis and after any student or staff member with COVID-19 symptoms leaves the room.</p> <p>Transportation staff will regularly clean and disinfect buses using the approved cleaning and disinfecting products and equipment on which they have been trained.</p>
Cohorting	<p>Cohorting refers to establishing a consistent grouping of students that stays together for a significant portion of the school day.</p> <p>This mitigation strategy helps to minimize the number of close contacts in an exposure event between students and staff by intentionally limiting the possible number of interactions students may experience during the day. Cohorting will be a strategy implemented by the Bend-La Pine Schools when conditions warrant elevating the mitigation strategies due to increased prevalence of community and in-school transmission of COVID -19 cases.</p> <p>In the event that we would need to elevate our cohorting strategies, students would not be placed into full-time cohort groups based on any demographic or disability criteria (e.g., students with complex medical needs, students with IEPs, students receiving language services, etc.).</p> <p>Schools may consider creating small groups within cohorts around skills and instructional needs.</p>

Contact tracing	<p>Bend-La Pine Schools encourages staff and families to self-report to the school if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days. Per HIPAA guidelines, Bend-La Pine Schools will maintain privacy and confidentiality.</p> <p>Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.</p> <p>Bend-La Pine Schools will alert families if their student has been identified to have had prolonged contact with a positive case.</p>
Equity	<p>Health equity considerations related to the school setting are a critical part of decision-making and have been considered in Bend-La Pine Schools' updated guidance for schools.</p> <p>School administrators can promote health equity by ensuring all students, teachers, and staff have resources to support physical and mental health. They will also work with parents to understand concerns for their students..</p> <p>According to the CDC, people living in rural areas, people with disabilities, immigrants, and people who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native, Black or African American, and Hispanic or Latino have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19; these disparities have also emerged among children.</p> <p>Bend-La Pine Schools' promotes equity in learning and health, particularly for groups disproportionately affected by COVID-19.</p>

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	<p>Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, such as covering coughs and sneezes, is encouraged for staff, students and visitors. Hand sanitation stations are provided throughout all district facilities.</p> <p>Safe handwashing procedures will be posted at Bend-La Pine Schools' sites including bathroom washing stations and classroom sinks.</p> <p>Bend-La Pine Schools will continue to implement protocols and systems to ensure access to soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Schools will prioritize handwashing with soap and water after students or staff use the restroom and throughout the day as appropriate.</p>
Exposure, Quarantine & Isolation	<p>When an individual has been identified as a close contact to a person with COVID-19, the following protocols will be followed:</p> <p>Unchanged: An exposure is defined as a susceptible individual who has close contact (less than 6 feet) for longer than 15 cumulative minutes in a day with a person who has COVID-19.</p> <p>Unchanged: If a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, then the local public health authority will be consulted to review the situation.</p> <p>Unchanged: Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine so long as they remain asymptomatic.</p> <p>New: If a school can confirm that 6 feet of distancing was consistently maintained during the school day, or 3 feet of distancing with consistent mask use was maintained during the school day, then each person the confirmed case was in contact with will not need to quarantine – this could include all members of a stable cohort.</p>

	<p>New: K-12 Quarantine Exception: Quarantine is not necessary for: Students who were within 3 or more feet of a person with COVID-19; where both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting face coverings; and Other K–12 school prevention strategies were in place in the K–12 school setting.</p> <p>School and department administrators are required to exclude staff and students from school whom they have reason to suspect have been exposed to COVID-19. (OAR 333- 019-0010).</p> <p>Isolation protocol will follow state and local health guidelines for response to related illness events.</p> <p><i>See the COVID-19 Exclusion Summary Guide for exclusion and isolation protocols for sick students and staff identified at the time of arrival or during the school day.</i></p>
<p>Masking - Indoors Educational Hours</p>	<p>Masks are required to be worn in all indoor shared school and work settings, during school hours, for all individuals two years and older, including all students, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors, per the Oregon Health Authority’s new statewide rule (OAR 333-019-1015).</p> <p>Group mask breaks, full classroom mask breaks, department staff mask breaks are best done outdoors where ventilation and physical distancing are maximized.</p> <p>Masks will be made available at schools and district buildings.</p> <p>Certain accommodations for medical needs or disability may be necessary.</p>

	<p>An individual is not required to wear a mask indoors if the individual is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Actively eating or drinking. (b) Sleeping. (c) Playing a musical instrument that requires using the mouth. (d) Engaged in a sport during physical education class such as swimming, other water sports, or a sport where wearing a mask could be a strangulation hazard such as gymnastics or wrestling. (e) Alone in a private office enclosed by walls on all sides with a door that is closed. (f) Is under the age of two.
<p>Masking - Indoors School Programs</p>	<p>All youth under age 12 are required to wear a facemask when indoors, on district property, or when engaged in a school program, after school hours.</p>
<p>Masking - Outdoors School Day</p>	<p>Masks are not required outdoors, during the school day.</p> <p>Per OHA rule and guidance, it is acceptable for both fully vaccinated and unvaccinated students, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors, to be outdoors without a face covering.</p>
<p>Masking - Athletics & Activities</p>	<p>Masks are recommended but not required for athletics or activities taking place outside of school hours.</p> <p>Bend-La Pine Schools indoor and outdoor athletics and activities will continue to follow all OSAA guidance. Schools and athletic programs will adhere to facility capacity requirements, per state and local fire marshal regulations.</p> <p><i><u>Per OHA guidance, face coverings are recommended but are not required for indoor sports.</u></i></p>

Masking - School/Staff Penalties	<p>A school that violates the state masking rule is subject to a civil penalty of \$500 per day per violation.</p> <p>OHA has authority/responsibility under ORS 431A.010 for additional action.</p> <p>Licensed educators who fail to obey this rule may face additional penalties, including, but not limited to, loss of license.</p>
Notification	<p>When schools or departments become aware that a person with COVID-19 has been present in our facilities, we will communicate with identified affected school families and/or staff.</p>
Pre-Entry Screenings & Contact Tracing	<p>Staff will follow procedures established regarding observation of students/staff with COVID-19 symptoms.</p> <p>Students/staff identified as close contacts to a COVID-19 positive case will follow ODE/OHA Planning for COVID-19 Scenarios in Schools Guidance.</p>

Physical Distancing	<p>Staff will promote physical distancing by doing the following when possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support physical distancing in all daily activities and instruction, maintaining at least 3 feet between individuals to the extent possible. Maintaining physical distancing should not preclude return to full-time, in-person instruction for all students.● Consider physical distancing requirements when setting up learning and other spaces, arranging spaces and groups to allow for and encourage at least 3 feet of physical distancing.● Physical distancing of desks, floor markers, and one-way traffic are no longer required, but personal distance preferences will continue to be respected.● Students and staff who have not been vaccinated are strongly advised to maintain physical distance (avoiding hugs, handshakes, prolonged proximity under 3 feet to the extent possible) in addition to wearing a face mask.● Meals may be consumed outdoors, to the extent possible. <p>Students, staff, and visitors will be asked to be mindful of physical distancing.</p>
School Schedule	<p>Bend-La Pine Schools plans to open all schools face-to-face at full capacity, five days per week. For students who must be absent due to illness or school closure, due to COVID-19 spread, the District will provide access to learning.</p>

Testing	<p>The district will offer COVID-19 testing opportunities for students or staff who develop symptoms at school or are exposed to COVID-19 at school.</p> <p>The district will continue to partner with local medical professionals and the local health authority to share information with families and staff regarding testing site locations.</p>
Vaccinations	<p>Bend-La Pine Schools recognizes that the best approach to preventing the spread of COVID-19 is a layered defense of protective measures, with the COVID-19 vaccination being the best defense in protecting individuals from contracting COVID-19 and preventing the spread of the virus to others.</p> <p>Students and staff are not required to get COVID-19 related vaccinations in order to attend or be employed at Bend-La Pine Schools. In the event of a COVID-19 exposure, students and staff may voluntarily disclose their vaccine status and the quarantine time period will not be required, so long as the individuals remain asymptomatic.</p> <p>Bend-La Pine Schools acknowledges that the opportunity for vaccination is currently only approved for adults and children over the age of 12. Additionally, some staff, students, and community members may not or cannot be vaccinated due to medical, religious or personal reasons.</p> <p>When vaccines become available to those under the age of 12, Bend-La Pine Schools will partner with medical partners to provide space, through Facility Use Agreements, for COVID-19 vaccination clinics at no charge. Bend-La Pine Schools will support communication of COVID-19 youth vaccination clinic information to staff, students and families. Bend-La Pine Schools will require parent/guardian consent for release from school to on-site vaccine clinics that take place during the school day.</p>

Ventilation

Bend-La Pine Schools will continue to ensure effective ventilation and improve the indoor air quality in schools and facilities by:

- Continuing to increase the amount of fresh outside air that is introduced into the system.
- Exhausting air from indoors to the outside.
- Maintaining a climate level that balances comfort and safety within a classroom and building.
- Cleaning the air that is recirculated indoors with effective filtration methods (HEPA filters) to remove virus-containing particles from the air. District maintenance staff will continue to monitor and replace air filters in buildings as needed to maintain appropriate levels of filtration.
- Adhering to fire code regulations when opening doors and windows for additional air circulation. Fire rated doors will not be propped open for air circulation purposes.
- Continuing to monitor air quality during wildfire season to provide guidance on air circulation requirements in schools and buildings, to mitigate hazardous smoke/air from entering building HVAC systems.
- Air handlers run with MERV-13 filters.

When outdoor air quality index exceeds 101:

- Windows will be closed.

When outdoor air quality index exceeds 201:

- Students are required to remain indoors for PE, recess, lunch, etc.

Visitors & Volunteers

Bend-La Pine Schools will allow limited approved volunteer access to essential, fully vaccinated, masked persons when there is moderate, substantial or widespread COVID-19 community transmission, per Superintendent, or designee, approval and KCA-AR.

Bend-La Pine Schools will allow, beyond the school lobby, all visitors and volunteers who are fully vaccinated and masked when there is minimal COVID-19 community transmission, per KK-AR and KCA-AR.

- Schools should not limit access for direct service providers, but can ensure compliance with school visitor policies.
- Schools should continue to emphasize the importance of staying home when sick. Anyone, including volunteers, who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as flu or COVID-19, should stay home and seek testing and care.

Schools may allow for outdoor family visitors for calendared school-wide events.

Next Steps

OHA has been clear that they will review [OAR 333-019-1015](#) monthly, as it is a temporary rule and that the agency's "goal is to return to local decision-making".

Masking is one of several layers of protections that we have in place in our schools to help ensure the health of our students during this pandemic. Ventilation, handwashing, staying home and getting tested when sick, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe. Above all, vaccination is the greatest tool available to fight COVID-19 and keep students in their classrooms.

As such, should [OAR 333-019-1015](#) expire or become rescinded by Governor proclamation, and local control of decision making be reinstated AND the date is 60 days after COVID-19 vaccines have become readily available to students under 12 years old, it would be our recommendation for indoor masking to become strongly recommended rather than required for all students and staff.

Should [OAR 333-019-1015](#) expire and local control of decision making be reinstated AND the date is **not** 60 days after COVID-19 vaccines have become readily available to students under 12 years old, we would recommend indoor masking to continue to be required for students under age 12 and strongly recommended for all over age 12, while engaged in compulsory education

Additionally, upon reinstatement of local control of decision-making, the district would continue to partner with local public health authorities to monitor both community rates of transmission and in-school or in-department transmission activity. In cases where localized transmission rates elevate in schools, district administrators, partnering with local health, may institute more restrictive non-pharmaceutical interventions on a case-by-case basis as conditions are warranted. These circumstances could include but are not limited to: returning to required masking, increasing of cleaning and hand washing strategies, tighter cohorting practices, and returning to remote learning in cases where significant transmission is prevalent.