



Hawaii State
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HIDOE schools will use new COVID-19 benchmarks to plan for gradual transition to blended learning models

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The DOH metrics outline five levels of community transmission that would trigger corresponding learning model parameters for schools to consider.

The Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) will use newly released guidance from the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) to plan for appropriate learning models for the remainder of the academic year.

With the new health policy guidance in hand, planning and decision-making for the second quarter, which runs from Oct. 12 to Dec. 18, can begin and will be done at the [complex area level](#) (groups of high schools and their feeder elementary and middle schools).

The DOH metrics outline five levels of community transmission of COVID-19 that would trigger corresponding learning model parameters for schools to consider and to assist with decision making. HIDOE will use the metrics to look at case activity within counties and by complex area.

Cumulative new case rate per 10,000 population over 14 days by island of residence	Consider Adopting for Elementary	Consider Adopting for Secondary
0 – 5.0	In-person learning	In-person learning
5.1 – 15.0	In-person learning	Blended learning
15.1 – 25.0	Blended learning	Blended learning
25.1 – 35.0	Blended learning	Learn from home
35.1 +	Learn from home	Learn from home

Source: Hawaii State Department of Health, Learning Model Parameters

According to DOH, using Oahu as an example, with a population of 974,563 and a total of 1,937 cases from Sept. 1-14, there were 19.9 cases per 10,000 for the 14-day period.

"The safety of our students, teachers, staff and leaders remains our highest priority. We appreciate having benchmarks that will allow our schools to move forward safely, strategically and based on sound data from our health experts," Superintendent Dr. Christina Kishimoto said. "The wide variation we're seeing in case counts within individual communities means that we cannot adopt a statewide approach for all schools. These triggers provide a benchmark for schools to use in carefully and safely planning for increased on-campus access for students beginning with Quarter 2, as appropriate."

During this transition, individual school plans could include such modifications as increasing the number of vulnerable students who have access to in-person instruction. Identified supports for vulnerable students vary among schools and may include, for example, students who require specialized learning services, students who need additional academic support, students in key transition grades, and students who lack internet access.

"I appreciate the collective commitment of our school communities of leaders, teachers, staff and parents in working together to ensure teaching and learning continues amid this health crisis," Kishimoto added.

For planning purposes and to minimize disruption, parents should anticipate the second quarter will begin as a continuation of learning from home, as schools plan for a gradual rollout of blended learning opportunities and continue to monitor COVID case activity in their communities against the DOH metrics. As decisions are made, schools will communicate with families.

Most HIDOE schools have been delivering instruction via distance learning since the start of the school year. The Department extended that mode of instruction from an initial four weeks to the entire first quarter based on conditions at the time. The first quarter ends Oct. 2, followed by a one-week fall break. The second quarter runs through December 18.

The DOH guidance is posted [here](#). The Department of Health will update its transmission rates and corresponding learning models every two weeks [here](#) (scroll down past the dashboard).

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