

Decision Making for School District Operations for the 2020-2021 School Year

Rev. August 4, 2020

Background

The Agency of Education (AOE) and Department of Health's [Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools, Fall 2020](#) and the AOE's [Hybrid Learning During the 2020-2021 School Year](#) established the basic state-level direction for reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year, and described both the health requirements and the instructional options necessary to ensure their continuous operation. The purpose of this guidance is to describe the decision making considerations for implementing this guidance to provide clarity around the various roles in the decision making process.

Instructional Dispositions

School districts will have three instructional dispositions available to them:

1. In-Person Learning – Students receive instruction at school;
2. Remote Learning – Students receive instruction online or through distributed materials; and
3. Hybrid Learning – Some combination of in-person learning and remote learning.

School districts will have the authority to decide which instructional dispositions will be implemented in their schools. School districts should describe their instructional dispositions through policy or administrative procedure. See [Hybrid Learning During the 2020-2021 School Year](#) for considerations for these policies and procedures.

The Secretary of Education will require superintendents to submit a monthly report on the percentages of students in each instructional disposition and their grade levels.

Statewide Public Health Conditions

The [Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools, Fall 2020](#) refers to three levels or steps for health precautions necessary to implement in-person instruction. These step levels will be determined by the Department of Health based on an assessment of state-level health conditions. All Vermont schools will be placed at the same step level.

- Step 1 – Community spread; school is closed for in-person instruction through health order or executive order;
- Step 2 – Virus is suppressed but a high degree of school-level protections are implemented; and
- Step 3 – Virus is suppressed but a limited degree of school-level protections are implemented.

The Department of Health will determine step levels based on the data being used by the Governor's COVID-19 leadership team to inform Vermont's COVID-19 response. See the [Department of Financial Regulation COVID-19 Resource Center](#) for more information.

Closing Schools for In-Person Instruction

Other than under Step 1, the decision to close schools or certain classrooms for in-person instruction will be made by the local superintendent after consulting with the Department of Health.