

COVID-19 and Schools: Mitigation Strategies, Community Spread, and Decision-Making

August 17, 2020

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CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT *of* PUBLIC HEALTH

Yale SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COVID-19

- SARS-CoV-2
 - Coronavirus - cause of COVID-19
 - Transmission modes:
 1. Respiratory droplets (*primary mode*)
 2. Respiratory secretions on surfaces (*less significant*)
 3. Aerosols of respiratory secretions (*possible in certain conditions*)
- COVID-19
 - Signs
 - Symptoms
- Transmission to and from children
- Risk to children



Testing for COVID-19

- Types of SARS-CoV-2 tests
 - Swab
 - Viral Polymerase Chain Reaction
 - Antigen (rapid)
 - Blood
 - Antibody
- Use and usefulness of SARS-CoV-2 tests
- Screening
 - Symptoms
 - Signs (e.g., temperature-fever)



Decision-Making

How will administrators decide whether...

Full in-person learning

or

Hybrid (blended) learning

or

Full virtual learning

is the best model and when to change?

Indicators of Community Spread

Counting only community cases will exclude cases in settings like prisons or nursing homes.

Leading Indicator

New Community Cases per 100,000 population

Daily average for previous week
County level

Town-level data will be available online, but we don't recommend using only town case rates.

In small towns, just a few cases can lead to a very high case rate.

Secondary Indicators

Test Positivity

Daily average for previous week
County level

New Hospitalizations per 100,000 population

Daily average for previous week
County level

COVID-like illness

Hospital ED visits

Percentage of emergency department visits for previous week
County level

Leading Indicator

New Community Cases per 100,000 population

Daily average for previous week at the county level

Case Rate

Risk Level

Interpretation

<10

Low

Favors in-person learning

10-25

Moderate

Favors hybrid learning

>25

High

Favors remote learning

Secondary Indicators

Test Positivity

**New Hospitalizations
per 100,000 population**

**COVID-like illness
Hospital ED visits**

Trend

Risk Level

Interpretation

↓ or →

Low

Favors in-person learning

→ or ↗

Moderate

Favors hybrid learning

↑

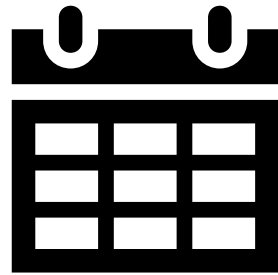
High

Favors remote learning

Each week will be compared to previous weeks to identify trends.

When and where can I find this information?

Metrics will be
posted online each
Thursday afternoon.



Consider having a standing
meeting on Fridays to
discuss your local situation.

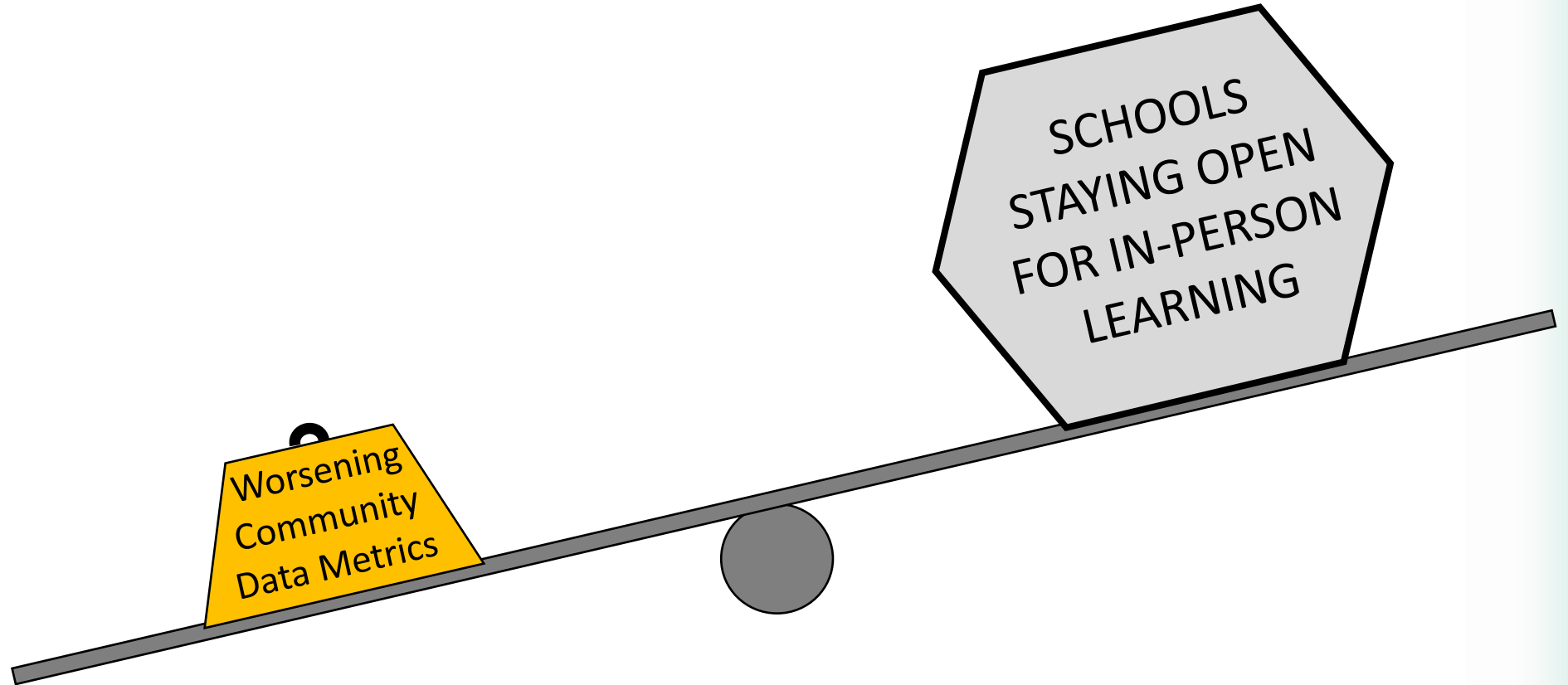
A link will be provided starting next week.

Indicators as of August 13th

Leading and secondary indicators of COVID-19 infection levels by county				
	Leading Indicator	Secondary Indicators		
County	New COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population per day	Percent test positivity	New COVID-19 hospitalizations per 100,000 population per day	Percent COVID-19-like illness hospital ED visits
Connecticut	1.8	0.9%	0.5	1.1%
Fairfield	2.6	1.4%	0.5	1.8%
Hartford	1.3	0.8%	0.4	0.5%
Litchfield	0.5	0.2%	0.1	1.1%
Middlesex	1.3	0.6%	1.0	1.0%
New Haven	1.8	0.9%	0.6	1.7%
New London	1.1	0.8%	0.3	1.1%
Tolland	0.3	0.3%	0.0	0.4%
Windham	2.3	1.3%	0.0	0.4%

Decision-Making

Worsening data for **community rates** will affect decision-making...
but it should be considered **in context with other factors**.

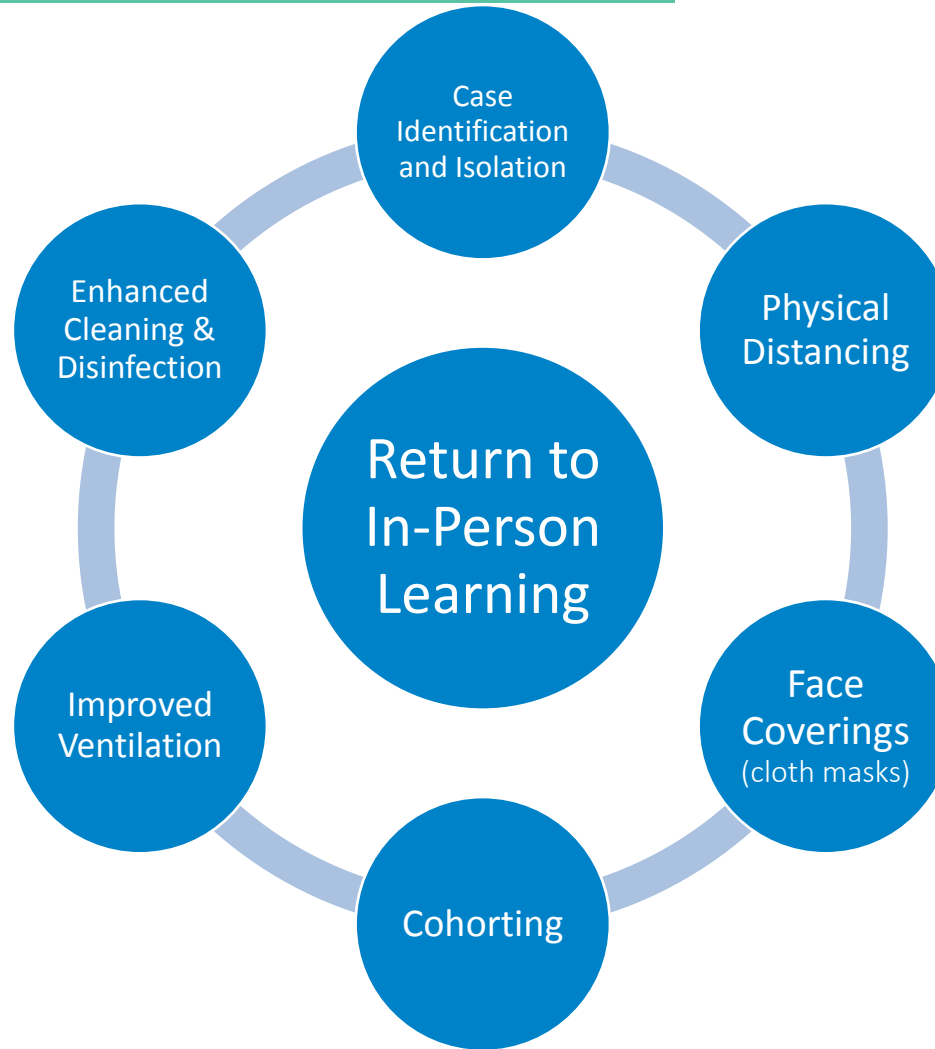


Mitigation Strategies

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Mitigation Strategies

Systems Approach to Maximize Health and Safety

- **Face Coverings** (masks)
 - Types/Styles/Fabrics?
 - Exhalation valves
 - Exemptions?
- **Physical Distancing**
 - 6 ft.? 12 ft.? 3 ft.?
- **Hand Washing**
 - Soap/water?
 - Hand sanitizer?
 - Methanol?
- **Cohorting**
 - What size?
 - Classrooms
 - Buses
 - Extracurriculars
- **Cleaning and Disinfection**
- **Ventilation**
- **Identification, Isolation, and Exclusion**
 - Symptomatic
 - Positive test result
 - Contacts



Temperature Screening

DPH is currently not recommending temperature screening at schools:

- Poor indicator of COVID-19 infection status
- Bottlenecks
- Inaccurate readings/repeated testing
- False sense of security
- Labor intensive
- Instead, give some ownership to students/parents for health monitoring

Mitigation Strategies

Before Schools Open

- Work with municipal officials and the Local Health Department to plan and operationalize
- Communicate what/how strategies will be used and expectations for
 - Parents
 - Students
 - Teachers and other staff

After Schools Open

- Train, practice, re-train (masks, policies)
- Adapt to changing conditions, problems with compliance
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!



CDC Print Resources

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<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html>

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How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering

Accessible: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

WEAR YOUR FACE COVERING CORRECTLY

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Do not place a mask on a child younger than 2



USE THE FACE COVERING TO PROTECT OTHERS

- Wear a face covering to protect others in case you're infected but don't have symptoms
- Keep the covering on your face the entire time you're in public
- Don't put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the face covering, and, if you do, clean your hands



FOLLOW EVERYDAY HEALTH HABITS

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available



TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTH FACE COVERING CAREFULLY, WHEN YOU'RE HOME

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Wash your hands with soap and water



Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators, both of which should be saved for health care workers and other medical first responders.


For instructions on making a cloth face covering, see: [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)



Students: Let's work together to stop the spread of COVID-19

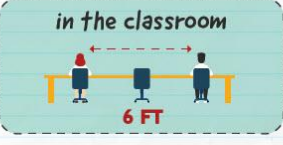
KEEP SPACE BETWEEN YOU AND OTHERS

when outside



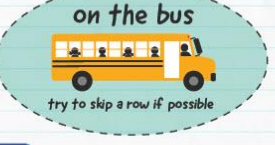
6 FT

in the classroom




6 FT

on the bus



try to skip a row if possible



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

HANDWASHING

is your superpower!



FIGHT OFF GERMS!

WASH YOUR HANDS!



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

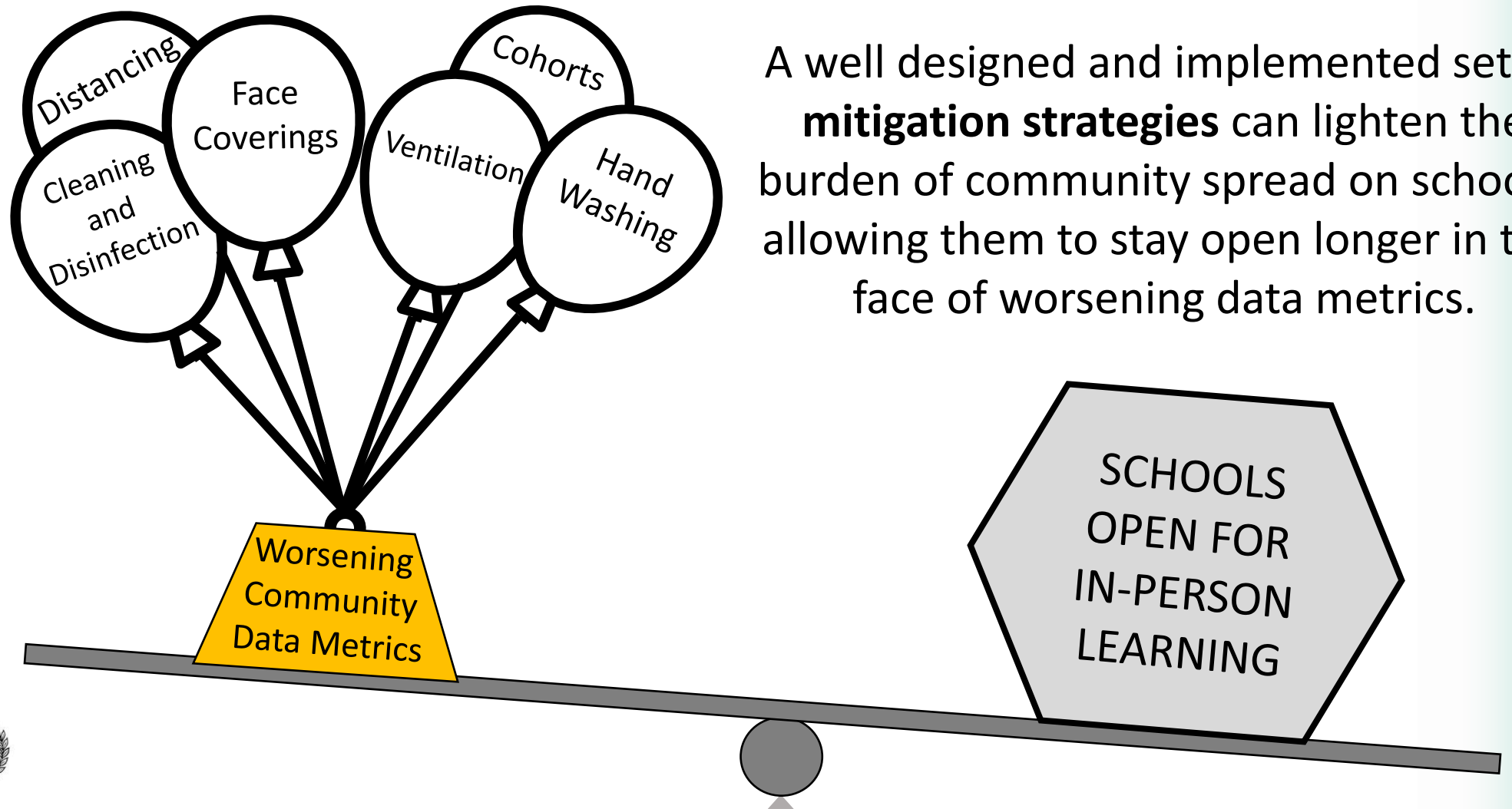


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**Thank you for all you do to make CT schools
healthy environments for learning!**

Questions?

