



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



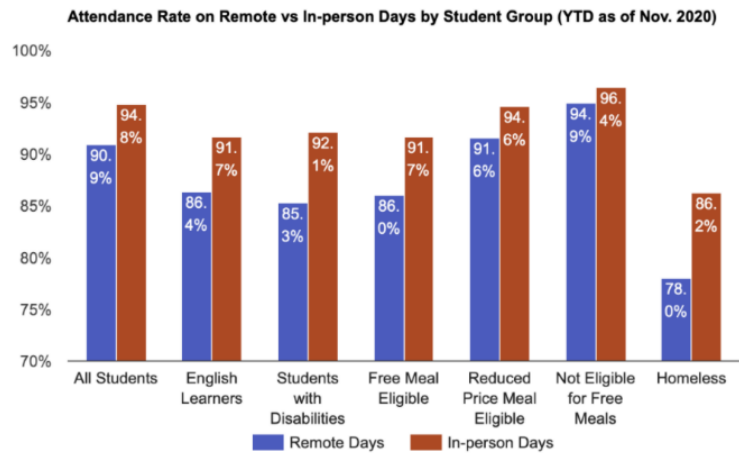
December 17, 2020

Dear Superintendents:

Please accept my continued appreciation for your support, leadership, and flexibility during the pandemic. We are proud that Connecticut school districts' experience has been successful in returning students to the classroom in various models, with limited evidence of in-school transmission of COVID-19 due to our commitment to mitigating strategies.

As you know, on December 2, 2020, the CDC published **new quarantine guidance: [Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing | CDC](#)**. Yesterday, you probably received the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) **updated guidance** on the same topic. The purpose of this letter is to share the updates with you and **provide an optional template letter** (attached) that you may personalize to communicate with your school community.

It has been reported to us that school closure decisions have been most often related to staffing shortages, rather than in response to evidence of in-school transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, a shorter quarantine period may increase the opportunity for our Connecticut students to engage in in-person learning. Accumulating evidence supports the view that in-person education is more effective for learning and important for the short-and-long-term well-being and academic success of Connecticut students. As you can see in the accompanying chart, **preliminary attendance data** indicates greater attendance and engagement for students that are learning in person. Students with greater need are less likely to attend regularly if they are remote. In-person options with strong implementation of mitigating efforts can help reduce the exacerbation of gaps that we believe have worsened during the pandemic.



I know that this change in approach to quarantining will bring new challenges. I support you in taking time to be thoughtful about next steps to implementation.

**Below are some considerations as you implement these CDC and CT DPH quarantine recommendations:**

- Health and safety;
- Equity and access of education and COVID-19 testing;
- Coordination of classroom schedules for each individual in a cohort with flexible dates of return within these options;
- The impact of these options for students, such as whether the school model (in-person, hybrid or remote) influences the implementation; and
- The impact of these options for educators and other staff, considering their duties, such as roles with sustained and close contact with students.

As you assess how this guidance is best implemented in your schools, ensure you engage your board, collaborate with your local health department, communicate this change with your community, and discuss implementation actions with staff union representatives.

**Our joint DPH and CSDE morning call on Tuesday, December 22, 2020 will be devoted to this topic.** Encourage your local public health official, COVID Liaison, and school-based health providers to prioritize this call so we can all engage in a robust conversation about this new guidance together. Please [direct questions for that conversation to us](#) in advance of our meeting on Tuesday.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Miguel A. Cardona". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Miguel A. Cardona  
Commissioner of Education