Expanded In-Person Learning for Public Schools: The Requirements

As of Monday, March 8, 2021, all districts and schools are eligible to expand to full, in-person learning, per the PED Reentry Guidance. All districts and schools must adhere to the following requirements:

COVID-Safe Practices (CSPs)
COVID-safe practices as outlined in the PED Reentry Guidance and COVID-19 Response Toolkit must be strictly enforced at all times. CSPs include, but are not limited to:

- Masks available and utilized by all staff and students;
- Classrooms and common areas set up for 6 feet of social distancing, to the greatest extent possible;
- Cafeteria and congregate eating areas set up for 6 feet of social distancing, to the greatest extent possible;
- Outdoor eating and drinking is encouraged, where possible, and additional mitigation practices are recommended for any congregate eating/drinking breaks;
- Ample cleaning supplies and daily sanitization protocols in place (including high-touch areas, playgrounds, and buses);
- Soap and supplies in bathrooms with reliable running water and hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol available across the school;
- Evacuation and dismissal plans that maintain 6 feet of social distancing, to the greatest extent possible;
- Full compliance with indoor air quality standards;
- Proper personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Isolation rooms for symptomatic individuals;
- Protocols and signage for entry into the building;
- Signage throughout the school site about prevention practices; and
- Protocols for students exhibiting symptoms on buses or before entry.

Surveillance testing
All staff are required to participate in surveillance testing. For schools in red counties, there is a 25% per week requirement, ensuring that all in-person staff are tested on a monthly basis. For schools in yellow and green counties, there is a 12.5% per week requirement, ensuring all in-person staff are tested on a bi-monthly basis. Schools in turquoise counties are required to test 5% of staff on a weekly basis. School staff who are fully vaccinated may be exempt from testing protocols. Additional details regarding surveillance testing can be found in the PED’s COVID-19 Response Toolkit.

Expansion of in-person learning site visits
Prior to expanded in-person learning, each school must receive a reentry site visit. These visits, conducted by a local or state fire marshal in collaboration with the PED, will review the COVID-safe practices checklist to ensure adherence to all guidelines. Additional details about site visits can be found on the PED school reentry page.

Signed assurance document
Each school or district that wishes to expand in-person learning must submit a signed assurance document indicating that the district/school will follow PED Rapid Response Protocols and agree to the requirements and guidance outlined in the PED COVID-19 Response Toolkit.

Additional expanded in-person learning information and guidance is available at bit.ly/BackToSchoolNM.