



# Department of Public Health

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## Recommendations for Return to School After Winter Break

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health is publishing the following recommendations as part of the ongoing commitment with local schools in an effort to promote a safe return to school after the winter break.

Currently the hospitalization rate is on a downward trend, having dropped below the 20% hospitalization threshold set by the Trauma Service Area I (TSA). Region 19 schools, together with the Texas Education Agency, created a plan to gradually return students to schools for in-person instruction, based on established TSA hospitalization threshold rates.

Despite our downward trend, we continue to closely monitor the effects of the recent holiday season on infections and hospitalizations in our region. Therefore, we are recommending the following:

- Start returning children for in-person instruction on or after January 18<sup>th</sup>.
- School Nurses and Medical/Health Assistants should receive COVID-19 vaccination during Phase 1a, second tier.
- Teachers and staff that qualify under Phase 1b should register with a vaccine provider to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Utilize rapid COVID-19 testing available for screening of teachers, staff and students, giving priority to symptomatic individuals.
- School Districts review and update current infection control protocols.

Should current pandemic situation change, further recommendations will be published which will address immediate risk to teachers, staff and students.

Hector I. Ocaranza, M.D., MPH, FAAP  
Local Health Authority City/County of El Paso, TX

**Angela Mora – Public Health Director**  
Department of Public Health | 5115 El Paso Dr. | El Paso, TX 79905  
O: (915) 212-6502 | <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/public-health>

