

## FAQ for K-1 In-Person Expectations

Dear Members,

LWEA bargained with LWSD starting in late September 2020 on the terms and conditions of working in-person for K-1 instruction. During this time, we were bargaining under the K-12 Decision Tree, which did not recommend in-person instruction, except in very specific cases when students could not access remote instruction, when cases exceeded 250/100K in the county. On December 16, Gov. Inslee and DOH announced revised metrics that school districts could use to guide their provision of in-person learning; [these revisions](#) were based on emerging research and data that the transmission of COVID in school environments can be reduced through strict safety measures. Shortly after that announcement, LWSD announced that they would plan for the return of students to in-person instruction, starting with K-1 students.

The school district has the mandate to provide a safe and effective learning environment for students, and they are required to ensure a safe workplace for employees. Our Association has worked to ensure that safety requirements and guidance is met or exceeded in these agreements. In addition, we represented member interests in manageable and reasonable workloads and for clearly defined agreement around job assignments and leaves.

Additionally, the school district needs to negotiate with the Association when change to the terms/conditions of the workday are so significant that our current agreements (including the CBA and COVID LOUs) are not sufficient. We will continue to meet with the District to negotiate the terms and conditions of in-person work for grades 2-5, special services (including intervention services), and secondary grades.

### Safety Considerations

#### 1. **Why aren't we waiting for teachers to be vaccinated before returning to in-person instruction?**

The DOH develops the [plan for COVID vaccination](#) in our state. Currently teachers are in [phase B](#). On December 16, Gov Inslee and DOH announced new metrics for operating schools in-person; the [revisions](#) were based on emerging research about the transmission of COVID in schools; basically new research shows that COVID transmission can be limited in school ***if health and safety practices are implemented with fidelity. Because the Governor changed the metrics for opening schools, school districts received a green light to begin returning students to in-person instruction.***

#### 2. **Can LWSD require staff or students to be vaccinated before returning to in-person instruction?**

It's a little complicated. A COVID vaccine mandate, by either the state or the District, seems unlikely but it could happen. Of course, people could choose not to be vaccinated and an employer could make it a job requirement. One has a right not to be vaccinated. One does not have a legal right to employment in a public school. The LWSD School Board does have a [policy on immunization](#). Additionally, it's important to note that regardless of vaccination availability, school districts will be required to ensure that all [mandatory health and safety requirements](#) are being met in schools for the foreseeable future.

#### 3. **Who is in charge of safety at my school?**

Every work site is required to have a COVID Site Supervisor; for school buildings, this is either the principal or the associate principal. Each work site also has a medical coordinator and coordinators for PPE, security, attestation/screening, signage, and custodial. Your building principal can provide a list of each person named in each position.

**4. How will staff and students be trained on COVID safety practices and protocols?**

The District will train staff and students on safety practices, protocols, and expectations. The District has agreed to provide this training during the work day for our members, synchronously, and to also make it available later for staff to review at any time.

**5. My principal has said that it isn't realistic to be able to meet all the requirements and standards related to COVID safety. Is it okay to compromise or adjust the safety requirements in order to be more "realistic"?**

Absolutely not!! The research that Gov. Inslee and DOH based their revised metrics on says that schools can operate in-person during COVID ***if health and safety practices are implemented with fidelity.***

**6. What do I do if I feel that my personal safety, or the safety of my students, is in jeopardy because the District's safety plan isn't being followed?**

It is the responsibility of the COVID site supervisor to monitor safety in the building and correct any lapses. The District has agreed that if members feel their safety is at risk, they can report using the system detailed in Part VIII, Section K.

**7. What would trigger a closure of a classroom or a school? Would the state ever close schools down again?**

A decision to close a classroom or a school lies with the Superintendent. DOH also has the authority to close a school or district in relation to a health concern.

**8. What happens if a student in my class contracts COVID? What happens if I contract COVID?**

The [positive case response](#) section of the District Safety Plan details the steps to be taken if someone has a confirmed case of COVID. The District has agreed to notify staff who have been exposed to a COVID-positive person before the start of the next school day, or within 12 hours if they become aware over the weekend. Part VII, Section G of the LOU.

**9. What happens if my student has symptoms of COVID? What happens if I have symptoms of COVID?**

The [symptomatic case response](#) section of the District Safety Plan details the steps to be taken if someone develops COVID symptoms during the school or work day. The District has agreed to exclude anyone with COVID symptoms from the school building and to notify staff if they were exposed to someone with COVID symptoms at school/work by the end of the day. Part VII, Section F of the LOU.

**10. What PPE do I have access to?**

PPE is selected according to the task that you are doing. OSPI/DOH/L&I designated the PPE-by-task list for schools to follow. You can find it in the [PPE selection by task](#) section of the District Safety Plan. The District is required to provide PPE for all staff and students, and they have agreed to provide sufficient and, as needed specialized, PPE to staff and students. Part VII, Section A of the LOU.

**11. What other safety requirements are in place to mitigate the spread of COVID in the absence of on-site testing and/or vaccination?**

Sections A-M in Part VII of the LOU outline all the safety considerations we negotiated for members. The District is required by OSPI/DOH/L&I to ensure that

- Masking is implemented at all times
- physical distancing is possible
- hand hygiene is practiced
- ventilation is improved

- the frequency of cleaning/disinfecting/sanitizing is increased
- symptoms are screened for at the start of the day and monitored for throughout the day
- symptomatic individuals are excluded from the school/classroom
- everyone is trained on safety requirements, guidelines, and expectations.
- everyone on site complies with all safety and health requirements, guidelines, and expectations.

**12. What if I think that my room isn't being cleaned according to the District mandated schedule or standard?**

Each building will publish a custodial cleaning schedule and the District has agreed that head custodians will verify expected cleaning tasks and report this information to the site supervisors. If you feel that your room isn't being cleaned to standard, you would work with your site supervisor. Part VII, Section H of the LOU.

**13. Can substitutes work in multiple classrooms in-person over the course of a week?**

The DOH has told the District that it's okay if substitutes work in multiple classrooms over the course of a week. Substitutes will be trained in safety and health requirements, guidelines, and expectations before working on campus. Section VII, Section I of the LOU.

**14. Will there be any COVID testing on LWSD campuses or facilities?**

The District has not created any testing facilities on campus at this time. Anyone can get a test for COVID at a free [testing site in King Co](#) or through their medical provider.

Job Assignments

**15. How is the assignment of in-person vs. remote instruction being made?**

Article 23 of our CBA differentiates between transfers and reassignments. Classroom teachers, library media specialists, and elementary and secondary counselors fall under transfers; specialists fall under reassignments. Both transfers and reassignments can be voluntary (requested) or involuntary. Specialists can be reassigned at the direction of the program administrator.

Elementary staff are being surveyed by the District on their preference for in-person or remote, meaning elementary staff will essentially make a request for in-person or remote. The District will review the requests alongside the requests from families and determine placements for staff. Staff will be notified and then begin the process for transitioning from remote to in-person. In addition to the in-person and remote instructional staffing needs at each building, the District will need to consider an employee's need or request for accommodations.

Leaves

**16. Do teachers have to use their sick leave if they contract COVID or if they are excluded from work because they are a close contact of a COVID positive person?**

No. It's very important to keep sick people out of school buildings and also ensuring that employees don't bankrupt their sick leave benefits. Anyone who contracts COVID will have supplementary leave options (meaning leave that isn't your basic sick leave). Anyone who is excluded from the work site because they are a close contact of a COVID positive person will be assigned remote work until they can return. Part VI, Section B of the LOU.

Transition from Remote to In-Person

**17. When will I know if I'm remote or in-person?**

The District will be reviewing requests from staff and families during the week of 1/18 and will need to notify K-1 teachers by 1/21.

**18. What if I'm assigned in-person instruction and I refuse to return?**

Members who decide to not return if assigned in-person instruction have many leave options available, including leave without pay or a possible medical leave. We would ask members to work with us in LWEA office on specific needs or questions. Please contact [Terri Neely](#) for assistance.

**19. If I'm assigned in-person instruction and I need to make a change, will I be able to do so?**

[Proclamation 20-46](#) mandates that high-risk workers receive accommodations. Accommodations could include an alternate work assignment (remote instead of in-person) but could also include additional or specialized PPE or an environment where interactions with other people are limited. Anyone's risk status could change throughout the school year and the District would need to provide accommodations as needed.

**20. Once families make the choice of remote or in-person, will they be allowed to make changes before the end of the school year?**

The District will need to determine the student's need and the ability to provide a safe working and learning environment before any changes to a student's learning model are implemented. The District has agreed to compensate teachers for the additional workload should any student be added to their class (either remote or in-person). Part I, Section B.6 of the LOU.

**21. Do teachers have time to transition from remote to in-person instruction?**

Yes, the District agreed to provide a significant number of hours for teachers the transition from remote to hybrid. Part I, Section B of the LOU outlines all the supports for K-1 teachers who are changing to in-person and who are remaining remote; SN teachers who are changing to K-1 in-person and who are remaining remote SN; and EL teachers who are impacted by changes to the K-1 instructional model.

**22. Will I need to change classrooms?**

Anyone who has to pack up or move their classroom will be compensated. Part V, Section G of the LOU

The transition from remote to in-person means that building space will be used more frequently. Building space is prioritized for student learning needs and the needs of in-person instructors first. Part VIII of the LOU details the provisions for remote staff who wish to work on campus.

**23. Do K-1 teachers need to complete all the FastBridge testing before the transition begins?**

No. Before the transition, K-1 teachers will only be required to complete the FastBridge literacy assessment for students who are not remaining in their class. If a K-1 teacher is unable to complete the assessment of these students, they should work with their principal to determine addition supports. Teachers may also be provided with compensation to complete testing. For students remaining in their class, K-1 teachers have until February 19 to complete the assessment. In addition, the FastBridge math assessment is optional for K-1 for the remainder of the year. Part II, Section B of the LOU

Work Day**24. I'll be teaching in-person. Do I need to stay on campus for the whole work day?**

No, in-person staff may work from home (or stay at school) once the in-person portion of their instructional day is completed. Part I, Section A of the LOU

**25. Will staff meetings and other meetings be held in-person?**

Staff and department meetings will be held remotely. Staff can meet in small groups if held according to safety requirements, and staff can make a choice to attend an in-person meeting remotely. Part III of the LOU

**26. If I'm a remote teacher, am I part of the District's Virtual Academy?**

No, the District is still developing their Virtual Academy and it will operate as a choice school.

**27. If I'm a remote teacher, can I still work on campus?**

Remote staff retain the choice to determine their work location. They may work on campus depending on space needs in a building and in accordance with safety requirements, practices, and protocols. Part VIII Of the LOU

Instructional Day

**28. I see that K-1 teachers will be providing synchronous instruction in the afternoon. What's the expectation for the afternoon time?**

The afternoon schedule includes lunch, a movement break, 60 minutes of synchronous small group instruction time, asynchronous specialists, and asynchronous instruction such as Lexia, Dreambox, science or social studies lessons. Teachers may also provide a [synchronous or asynchronous checkout at the end of the school day](#); teachers may also choose to do a checkout at the end of the in-person time instead. Remote program specialists (e.g., EL and Safety Net) will most likely be scheduled almost exclusively in the afternoon. In addition, K-1 teachers have 75 minutes of planning time in the afternoon.

**29. Will specialists be used to provide planning time for in-person teachers?**

Asynchronous library, music and PE specialist lessons, remote program specialist services, or K-1 asynchronous lessons may be used to provide the required 75 minutes of planning time on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Specialist lessons will not be used during the in-person portion of day to provide planning time. Teachers also have at least 3 hours of planning time on Wednesdays.

**30. Has anything changed for specialists?**

Specialists will remain remote instructors and will continue to deliver asynchronous lessons; some exceptions for synchronous lessons are allowed [on Wednesdays](#). Part I, Section A.8 of the LOU.

**31. There are a lot of new supervision requirements that come with safely holding classes in-person during COVID. will K-1 teachers be supported in the classroom to ensure that safety needs can be met?**

Yes, the District agreed to provide K-1 in-person teachers with additional IA support in their classrooms to meet the learning and supervision needs of students during COVID. Part II, Section A of the LOU.