



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
*Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary*

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
*Dr. Karen Salmon, Superintendent*

March 25, 2021

Dear Local Superintendents of Schools:

Thank you for your continued support through the COVID-19 pandemic. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) appreciates all that you have done so far to address the spread of COVID-19 in your communities.

As many of you are aware, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued updated guidance on [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention](#) on March 19, 2021. MDH and MSDE have been carefully reviewing this updated guidance to inform Maryland's COVID-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools and a revised document will be forthcoming.

In the meantime, MDH and MSDE would like to bring the following to your attention:

In accordance with the CDC guidance, schools should allow for students, while in the classroom, to maintain 3 ft distance between each other. This updated guidance is the result of numerous and robust academic studies finding that 3 ft of distance between students did not significantly impact transmission of COVID-19 when compared to the earlier 6 ft distancing guidance. Adults should continue to maintain 6 ft distance from students and other adults.

This updated guidance and the continued low rate of cases in schools should empower all Maryland schools to bring more students back into the classroom and/or give students the opportunity to receive in-person instruction more frequently before the end of the school year. In accordance with the CDC guidance, schools should implement phased prevention strategies with an emphasis on prioritizing in-person learning.

MDH and MSDE sincerely appreciates all of the hard work that you and your staff have contributed to Maryland's COVID-19 response. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Dr. Jinlene Chan, Acting Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services, [jinlene.chan@maryland.gov](mailto:jinlene.chan@maryland.gov) or Dr. Karen B. Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, [karen.salmon@maryland.gov](mailto:karen.salmon@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.".

Dr. Karen B. Salmon  
State Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jinlene Chan MD".

Dr. Jinlene Chan  
Deputy Secretary, Public Health Services (Act.)