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07 / 09 / 2020

# COVID-19 UPDATE

## Health Officials Provide Guidance for School Districts and Private Schools

**EL PASO, Texas**— Public Health officials issued an updated order for all independent school districts and private schools in El Paso County for the reopening of on-campus instruction. The order goes into effect today, Thursday, July 9.

Health and area school system officials met earlier this week to discuss ongoing preventative measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

As the situation regarding COVID-19 in El Paso is rapidly evolving with observed rapid rate of transmission through community spread, health officials are recommending the following guidance to local schools:

- All school systems (public and private) shall not re-open schools for on-campus, face-to-face instruction until after September 7, 2020.
- Virtual instruction shall be permitted as per a school system’s own plan.
- To the extent permitted under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”), and consistent with the procedures required under the federal regulations and state rules implementing the IDEA, all children with special healthcare needs that are considered medically fragile under the IDEA shall not return to school for on-campus, face-to-face instruction, until the 2021-2022 school year.
- Extracurricular sports and activities shall not take place until school systems re-open for on-campus instruction.
- School systems shall develop a plan for re-opening on-campus activities and instruction and it make available to parents and the public, at least two weeks prior to reopening.

“As positive COVID-19 cases continue to rise, it is imperative that we do what is best for the safety of school children and school employees,” said City-County Local Health Authority Dr. Hector Ocaranza. “Keeping our community safe is our priority and we implore residents to continue to firmly adhere to all safety precautions to slow the spread of the virus, to include practicing social distancing, frequently washing your hands and wearing a face covering.”

The Health Order will be made available at [www.epstrong.org](http://www.epstrong.org) under “Health Orders.”

The public is reminded that even infected persons with little to no symptoms can spread the virus to others and the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions.

For more information, visit [www.epstrong.org](http://www.epstrong.org).

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