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## PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

February 12, 2021

Schelli Slaughter, MHA  
Director

Dimyana Abdelmalek, MD, MPH  
Health Officer

Dear Thurston County Superintendents and Heads of Schools,

I am writing to inform you that Thurston County has crossed an important threshold in COVID-19 transmission rates. As of today, transmission rates in Thurston County are at 198.5 cases per 100,000 over 14 days. According to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) [Metrics for K-12 education](#), at this Moderate COVID-19 activity level, DOH recommends careful phasing in of in-person learning starting with any elementary students not already in-person and middle school students. Then over time, adding high school after middle school and when rates drop below 200 cases per 100,000 over 14 days. I recommend schools prepare for a cautious, phased in approach to in-person learning opportunities for high school students after middle school students have returned and when this transmission level has sustained for an incubation period of the virus which is 14 days, which may be as early as March 1, 2021.

The communities and school districts in our counties are diverse and I support each district in their cautious phased in reopening plans in alignment with the Washington State Department of Health [guidance](#). I also recognize this will be different for each school district and community. The COVID-19 situation in Thurston County is dynamic and as conditions change, my guidance will also change to reflect the best available data and guidance.

I would like to commend all of you for your labor in keeping those who work and learn in our schools safe. I look forward to our continued partnership as in-person learning opportunities are safely expanded to include all of the K-12 learners in our county.

Sincerely,

Dimyana Abdelmalek, MD, MPH  
Health Officer, Thurston County