



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
300 DON GASPAR  
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786  
Telephone (505) 827-5800  
[www.ped.state.nm.us](http://www.ped.state.nm.us)

RYAN STEWART, ED.L.D.  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
GOVERNOR

September 3, 2020

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Superintendents, Charter Leaders, School Board Members  
**FROM:** Ryan Stewart, Cabinet Secretary, Public Education Department  
**RE:** **Updates on School Reentry Guidance**

---

Dear Superintendents, Charter Leaders, and School Board Members,

Today I announced a set of updates to the school reentry guidance. Public health officials released an updated map of counties meeting public health criteria – including test positivity rates of below five percent and new daily case rates of less than eight per 100,000. The updated map is displayed at the end of this document.

Schools and districts are eligible to return to in-person learning for elementary students after Labor Day if they

- are located in a county in the “green zone” on the public health map
- have a PED approved reentry plan
- have the superintendent or charter leader sign and return an assurance to abide by safety protocols outlined in PED guidance.

Deputy Secretaries will reach out to all superintendents and charter leaders to review and discuss the safety protocols and assurance page tomorrow, Friday, September 4. Superintendents must return the signed assurance via email to their Deputy Secretary point of contact via email prior to bringing students back for in-person learning. While schools and districts meeting these criteria are eligible to return, the ultimate decision about the date on which students return shall be made by the local school board or charter school governing council.

PED also announced an update to the requirements regarding class size limitations and social distancing requirements. Schools will be required to maintain social distancing of at least six feet ***and*** must limit the

number of students physically present in a classroom to no more than 50% of the students on a class roster.

An exception to the elementary student only requirement will be made for microdistricts. Districts located in counties in the green zone that have an enrollment for in-person learning of 100 students or less may bring back students in all grades for in-person learning in a 5:1 student to staff ratio per enclosed indoor space. Students and staff must be able to maintain social distancing of six feet at all times, and these districts must adhere to all health and safety requirements outlined in the PED reentry guidance and associated guidance documents. Prior to bringing back middle and high school students, microdistricts seeking to use this exception must first be approved through an onsite verification of space availability to maintain six feet of social distance. Districts meeting the microdistrict definition must send an email requesting the onsite verification to their designated Deputy Secretary point of contact. The Deputy Secretary and/or a PED designee will work with the superintendent of each district to arrange scheduling of the onsite verification. At this time, the exception does not apply to individual schools.

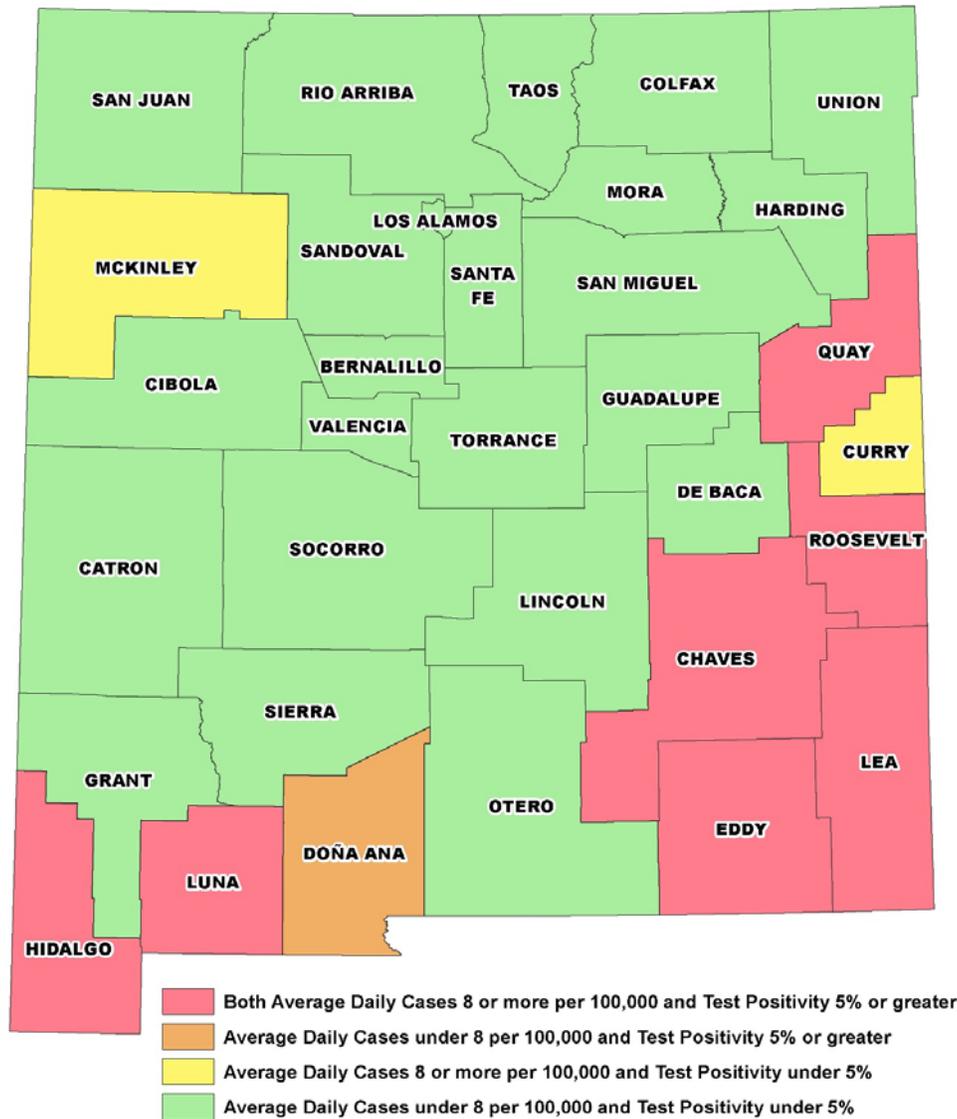
In collaboration with the Department of Health, PED announced that the state is making additional testing resources available to educators. A surveillance testing program will be implemented for all schools as they resume in-person learning. PED and DOH will test five percent of staff members each week.

PED also provided training to district and school COVID points of contact across the state. The toolkit which outlines the details regarding rapid response and other health-related measures can be found at this [link](#)<sup>1</sup>. Updates to the main guidance document and additional supporting guidance documents will be published to the PED website in the coming days.

Finally, no dates have yet been established for the eligibility for middle school and high school students to return for in-person learning. Schools and districts should avoid communicating or publishing dates for the return of older students at this point.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/reentry-district-and-school-guidance/>



**Test Positivity by Average Daily Cases per 100,000 Population,  
by New Mexico County,  
August 19 - September 1, 2020**