

Jan. 6, 2021

A Message from the COVID Safety Team

Dear staff,

As part of our ongoing work to keep you informed about COVID safety practices and protocols we will be sharing regular updates. Each update will include the latest information from local and regional agencies as well as stories and resources within our district.

After reading the COVID-19 vaccine information below, please send COVID-19 vaccine questions to BPS.health@bellingshamschools.org for us to address next week.

Gov. Inslee press conference regarding PreK-12 Schools

[Gov. Inslee held a press conference](#) on Dec. 16 and provided updated guidance for schools. He offered new metrics for decisions around in-person learning and that schools have had minimal spread with appropriate safety protocols. According to the [updated decision tree](#), Bellingham Public Schools is currently in the moderate COVID-19 activity range, allowing us to continue phasing in in-person learning with a priority towards PreK-5 followed by secondary students. [The Whatcom County Health Department has also revised its guidance for schools.](#)

Whatcom County data and updates

The current rate of confirmed and probable cases over the last two weeks is 175 per 100,000 Whatcom County residents.

[Whatcom County Health Department Data Dashboard](#)

The COVID-19 vaccine is in Whatcom County

Whatcom County is in Phase 1A of vaccine distribution, which started during our winter break. Phase 1A is separated into two tiers.

- Tier 1 includes high-risk workers in health care settings, high-risk first responders, and residents of nursing homes or assisted living facilities, and other community-based, congregate living settings where most individuals over 65 years of age are receiving care, supervision or assistance.
- Tier 2 includes all other workers in a health care system.

For more information you can read the [WA State COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Guidance, Phase 1A](#). School staff are considered a high priority for receiving the vaccine, but we have not received a timeline yet. We will know more when guidance for Phases 1B and 1C is released. Here are some resources for further learning:

- [Whatcom County COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)
- [WA DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)
- [Making Sense of Vaccines During COVID-19](#) one-hour webinar

Send COVID-19 vaccine questions to BPS.health@bellingshamschools.org

Interview with teacher Aly Delanty at Cordata Elementary



1. Who are you and what do you do at BPS?

My name is Aly Delanty, and I am a first grade teacher at Cordata Elementary School.

2. COVID has upturned everyone's worlds and forced us to rethink how we do our jobs from the bottom up. What's a COVID related challenge you weren't anticipating but have had to deal with?

I was anticipating that children would struggle with masks, not that masks would struggle with children's faces. I need someone to invent a mask that stays over child-size noses and then I need 100 of those masks.

3. Are there any changes you've had to make in response to COVID that you think you'll continue post-pandemic?

I would love to continue to have children walk themselves into class from their grade entrance every morning. I appreciate the calm and quiet start to our day when students trickle into the classroom. It gives me a lot of time to greet and connect with each student and get them started on our morning activity when they come in slowly between 7:40 and 8 a.m.

4. Is there anything you'd like district staff to know about the work you're doing?

In my class, we end each day with a review of our Problems & Ideas board. We list any problems that popped up and brainstorm ideas. If we tried an idea out and it worked then we found a solution and we get to erase the problem. This has been a great way for the class to be flexible in the pandemic. Our class routines and our schedule have had to change so many times and it's been hard to keep the same consistency that my classroom has had previously. Connecting it to problem solving and involving the whole class has been a great way to allow for all the changes that will keep happening as we try to navigate being safe in school.